

Chapter 1

Harry's spine popped painfully as he sat up from the cold, damp ground. His head was throbbing uncomfortably and the bright afternoon sunlight didn't help matters. He moaned weakly and began to massage his temples in an attempt to stave off the migraine. 'Damn,' he thought. 'All the spells I can use and I don't know one to cure a simple headache.'

It had been two years since he defeated Voldemort and almost as long since he broke off contact from his family and friends in the U.K. For most of that time he had traveled the world and learned new things. For the first time in his life, Harry was truly free. There was no war he had to worry about, no people who would nag at him on how to rule his life or smitten girls who annoyed him.

He wasn't exactly happy, but for the first time in his life he was content.

As he dropped his hands from his head he noticed that they were less callused and scarred, and the painful crick he had in his right shoulder wasn't there anymore. Moving and twisting his body experimentally, Harry was ecstatic to find that he felt better than he had since he was still at Hogwarts. 'That coming from a twenty two year old is actually pretty sad,' he thought with a wry smile. 'I shouldn't feel this old.' But then, Harry's trained mind finally caught up with him. Why did he feel better? He wondered. And with a cursory glance at his watch, he wondered also why he had slept well past noon.

Almost automatically, he rose to his feet, not even noticing that both the sleeping bag that he was supposed to be sleeping on and his camping gear were not there. With a wave of his hand he conjured a simple hand mirror and hovered it in front of himself, gasping at what he saw. He looked to be seventeen or eighteen years old! Just how the hell had that happened? He changed the mirror to a full length one and stared disbelievingly at his reflection. He twisted and turned and lifted his shirt to get a better look at himself. It seemed that, for whatever reason, he had de-aged physically to about seventeen

years old. It was complete enough that even the scars he had acquired since then had disappeared.

Stepping away from the clearing he was in, Harry finally noticed that his camping gear had come up missing. Also, by the looks of his surroundings, he was back on Hogwarts grounds, just a little ways from Hagrid's hut. 'I hope I haven't been sleeping apparating again.' Harry thought to himself.

But before he had the chance to observe his surroundings any closer or find his lost campsite, he heard what sounded like someone sniffing and sobbing near by. Putting the thoughts about returning back to his campsite aside for a few moments, he turned his attention to finding the person who was crying. It didn't take him long to find the girl. She was curled in a ball, her knees pulled to her chest and her arms wrapped around her legs. Her long red hair was in disarray as she rocked herself back and forth in her misery.

Harry began walking toward the little red head as she sobbed her heart out, intent on comforting her. Harry never was good with crying girls, but one thing was certain; he felt an overwhelming need to comfort her. "Hey there, are you ok?" Harry asked crouching near the young girl.

When the red head girl turned her head to him in surprise, Harry was shocked to see what he was seeing: A miniature copy of his mother...

The red head girl gasped when she saw him. "Dad...?" She whispered in a state of shock.

Harry was shocked to hear her call him dad, hell he would have called her mum if it wasn't for the fact that he knew she was too small to be his mother. His face showed a momentary expression of shock before he schooled his features into a more comforting mask of cheerfulness. "I'm sorry, but I'm not your father." he said with a laugh. "You're much too old and way too pretty to be a child of mine."

She giggled and smiled a little bit sadly. Of course, she thought, he looked no older then seventeen or eighteen.

Harry then noticed something on the little girl's forehead. It was a familiar looking lightning bolt scar that he had once possessed. Two years ago, after he had destroyed Voldemort during the final battle, his scar had disappeared, but the parseltongue ability that Voldemort had given him, still remained. But before Harry could ask the girl anything about her scar, the girl who was giving him a curious expression spoke.

"Umm... who are you? I have never seen you here at Hogwarts before." The girl said giving him a curious look while she was slowly edging her hand near her wand. He wasn't wearing Hogwarts robes and so she was immediately suspicious.

Harry saw her 'discreet' movement and had wandlessly summoned her wand to his hand before she was even close to touching hers. She stared up at him with a wide eyed and horrified look. He knew that look; it was a look people had when were helpless. But why would she look at him like that? Didn't she know who he was? He would never attack an innocent person, especially an innocent girl. Still, Harry was sure that she posed no threat with or without her wand. It was mostly a reflex action on his part; pounded into him from years of war. Harry sighed and with a rueful smile, handed her wand back. "Sorry," he said. "I saw you reaching for your wand and...well...reflexes and all. I don't mean you any harm, here, take it." Harry said, his smile changing to a warmer one.

The girl took her wand and sighed in relief. Fortunately, she didn't notice the small gold and scarlet sparks that spit from the end as she took it. "No...I'm sorry," she said back. "It's just... I have been through a lot lately. I'm not sure you heard, but my name had just been pulled out of the Goblet of Fire, for the Tri-Wizard Tournament."

"Tri-Wizard Tournament?" Harry asked with an arched eyebrow. What exactly was she talking about? Did she just say the Goblet of Fire? What Tri-Wizard Tournament? The Tournament hadn't been held since his 4th Year. He was pretty sure if the Ministry of Magic was planning to hold the Tournament again, he would have been notified. Thinking that this girl maybe not right in the head, he decided to get up to leave, but she had quickly grabbed his arm.

"Wait, please don't leave. I... I feel safe... when you're close... for some reason..." She trailed off with a blush and began to twiddle her thumbs nervously.

Harry smiled a little sadly at her and plopped down fully on the grass next to her. "So... what's your name?" he asked.

She gawked at him. "You don't know who I am?" She asked. Harry shook his head with a bemused expression on his face. Seeing his look of confusion, she knew he didn't know as he looked simply lost. "My name is Rose, Rose Lily Potter." She said quietly. She expected Harry to glance up at her scar and then begin babbling for her autograph or some sort of reaction. She wasn't disappointed.

Harry froze, and all the blood drained from his face. Did he hear right? No... it couldn't be... He turned away from her and glanced suspiciously at her from the corner of his eye.

"You really don't know who I am?" She asked again while blushing under the scrutiny of his gaze. He was more handsome than her crush Cedric Diggory! With his handsome face, piercing green eyes, and windswept, messy hair, not to mention that his clothes did nothing to hide his physique, no doubt any normal girl would be swooning and feeling like jelly if they were in her position.

Harry nodded a bit wearily. Something was definitely wrong here.

"I'm," Rose began to look uncomfortable shade of red. She took a deep breath and spoke again in a shy voice. "I'm Rose Potter, The Girl Who Lived. How could you not know about me?" she asked quietly and confusedly.

Harry lost his cool facade at the sound of her name and public title, and his jaw dropped. No way could she be who she claimed to be. He was the last living Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived. What was going on here? Harry's mind began whirling over every theory he could come up with, from wild magic, to poison mushrooms. Rose giggled at his gob-smacked expression. Snapping out of his daze, Harry scrambled to his feet and began to pace back and forth a few feet from her. Usually he would stun first and ask questions later, but for some reason he felt compelled to believe the girl.

Harry's sudden change in demeanor startled Rose. "Umm... what's wrong? Is there something wrong with me being The Girl Who Lived?" She whispered looking hurtful that someone who was genuinely kind to her a second ago was now reacting different to her because she was The Girl Who Lived. She had expected blind praise, not sudden caginess, and it especially hurt since her friends had abandoned her.

Harry quickly reassessed the situation and began to weave a simple plan. It would be best to roll with everything for the time being, and figure things out as he went along. He didn't feel like he was in any danger. "No, no, it's not that," Harry said waving it off. Either this girl was barmy or the mushrooms he had had for dinner the night before were more potent than even he had thought. Definitely need to go with it... "My name is Harry," he said sticking his hand out for a hand shake. "Nice to meet you."

Rose tentatively took his hand, "Harry..." she said testing out his name. "That's a nice name."

Harry nodded absentmindedly as his mind stuck on one possible theory. He drew his wand and, with a short wave, said, "*Tempus Balanus*." Blue letters and numbers ghosted from his wand and hovered in front of him.

November 1, 1994

11:45 A.M.

Harry was stunned... He was in 1994! The Year of the Tri-Wizard Tournament and the year that Voldemort had been reborn. Somehow he had been thrust, not only back in time, but into a an alternate dimension. 'Merlin's beard, that explains why this girl says she's The Girl Who Lived and is participating in the Tri-Wizard Tournament. I'm in an **alternate reality** where I was born a girl!' Harry rubbed his temples trying to stave of the migraine that was quickly developing.

Nothing was ever normal for Harry Potter...

"Do you go to Hogwarts Harry? Sorry, stupid question. Of course you're not from Hogwarts. You're not wearing a uniform and I know I

wouldn't have missed a nice looking face as you." She said turning pink as she realize what she had just said. "Are you from Beauxbatons or Durmstrang?"

"No," Harry replied back as he had fought down the headache that was coming and at the same time, was trying to get his act together. He needed information at the moment, where he was, what was going on, and what to do now, but that would come later. First, he was going to try and extract information from this girl named Rose, The Girl Who Lived. He took note that parts of the castle that should be destroyed from the war against Voldemort were still standing, meaning that he really was in an alternate reality. "I don't belong to any school. I've been home schooled most of my life."

"Oh, what brings you to Hogwarts?" Rose asked, smiling at him. "Here for the tournament?"

"Yeah, pretty much," Harry replied absentmindedly, as he glanced around at his surroundings. There were so many things that Harry had seen destroyed in the war. The Hogwarts Lake was still full; the maelstrom of spells hadn't yet dried it up. The castle itself stood proud and undamaged against the Scottish sky. 'This is so very strange,' thought Harry.

An uncomfortable silence fell between the two.

"So," said Harry, trying to break up the awkwardness of the situation. "You said you were picked as Hogwarts Champion?"

"Not quite," replied the red head looking at him uncertainly. "I was picked under some nameless school. I don't know how, but someone snuck my name into the Goblet of Fire and my name came out right after Cedric Diggory as the 4th Champion. You believe me right?"

Harry nodded to the girl and he began to brain storm again. He felt sorry for Rose, as he himself was in the exact same situation that she was in only eight years ago. He decided then and there to help her.

"You don't seem too surprised," Rose stated when she noticed Harry's thoughtful glance.

“Oh no, I am surprised,” he said. And he was, just not that Rose was champion. “You don’t strike me as the kind of person that would lie...unless you absolutely had to. I don’t think you’d want to like about something like this. So, if you say you didn’t put your name in the Goblet, I believe you.”

Smiling, Rose knew then that Harry was a kind person. “Thank you,” she said with a relieved sigh. “You are the only person who seems to believe me. My friends all abandoned me thinking I was lying to them.”

Harry knew how the red head felt, as he was in the same position as her when he had been chosen as Champion in his dimension, but at least Hermione stayed on his side. “I’m the only one?” Harry asked in confirmation.

Rose nodded to the messy haired, green eyed teenager. “Yes, even my friend Hermione didn’t believe me and she was the person least likely to leave me.” She said in a hurt and sad voice.

“What about your family?” Harry questioned in a quiet hoping voice. The thought of the Dursleys raising a witch curled his toes, but one look at her petite and malnourished form told him everything. “Did you try and talk to them for any advice?”

Rose gave him a bitter laugh, and shook her head sadly. “My *family*,” she spat the word as if it were something foul, “don’t like me. They hate me and detest my very existence. I doubt they would give me advice. They’d probably just tell me to die or something...”

Definitely sounds like the Dursleys, Harry thought.

“I take it you don’t like them either,” Harry said with a small comforting smile. “Well, you’re not the only one who dislikes their family.”

Rose glanced up at him with a look of confusion. “Say Harry, you didn’t tell me what your last name was. Would you mind telling me?” She asked in a small voice as she was looking at his eyes and hair closely. There was something very familiar about him. She did mistake him for her father when they first met.

Harry wasn't sure if he should tell her the truth or not. He figured at this point that if Rose was anything like him at that age, she was just starting to become suspicious of people and detested not being given any information. He figured it wouldn't hurt anything to tell her an embellished version of the truth. "Potter," he said. Rose's eyes widened almost comically, and Harry was pretty sure he knew exactly what was going through her mind. "I'm your cousin." It wasn't exactly the truth, but a version of it.

Rose looked surprised and shocked at what he had just said and suddenly she was a million miles away. Another Potter? She hoped this wasn't a dream. Perhaps now she would never have to go back to the Dursley's again.

"Is that why you were asking for my last name? You wanted to know why I resembled your father." Harry laughed and shook his head at Rose's stunned nod. "It's because we're family. I'm surprised you didn't figure it out sooner." Rose simply stared at him with a mixture of shock and hope written on her face. "I never really knew my family either. My parents were killed when I was a baby, a lot like yours, but I was sent to live with my aunt in London." Harry was enjoying the expressions that crossed Rose's face; shock, joy, confusion, then finally disbelief.

"But, what about your eyes, they're green. I never heard of any Potter's with green eyes." Rose said hesitantly. Harry's story had a lot of holes in it. Who exactly were his parents anyway? He definitely looked like a Potter, with his disheveled black hair, but Professor Lupin never mentioned that her father had any siblings. Perhaps one of his parents was a squib. She had heard about Hermione about pureblood families disowning their children when they discovered that the child was a squib. Perhaps that's why, but still, the Potters didn't sound like a family that would do something like that.

"Like yours, from my mother's side," Harry answered. "It seems Potter men have a thing for red haired, green eyed beauties."

Rose blushed at the veiled compliment. She blinked up at him for a few seconds before suddenly standing with a sob and embracing Harry in a rib cracking hug.

Once again mortified that the girl was crying, Harry began to wonder why girls were so emotional. Hesitantly, he returned her hug and rubbed soothing circles on her back till she calmed down. "It's ok," he crooned. "What's wrong?"

Between hiccups, Rose explained that she was happy that she finally had family that cared for her, and she eventually calmed down. The two of them spent the next few hours walking the grounds and getting to know each other better. While they were talking, Harry told her about his 'life' and about how his parents were killed as well as hers during Voldemort's reign. He explained it to her on how he was raised by his grandmother who was a muggle, from his mother's side. He told her how his grandparents were devoutly religious and upon finding out that Harry was a wizard, tried to 'cleanse' the magic from him. Rose nodded sympathetically as she knew exactly where Harry was coming from, what with her aunt and uncle. Harry told her how an old friend of his parents had come to visit one night and arranged a private tutoring schedule for Harry under the guise of a 'Gifted and Talented Students' tutor, to teach him about magic. Then, once he came of age, he left his grandparents house without ever saying goodbye.

Rose told Harry about the Dursleys and about growing up in the cupboard under the stairs, and her cousin, Dudley who constantly beat her up. She told him about how the half giant, Hagrid, rescued her one night and told her about her heritage and how she was really a witch. She told him all about her first year, and how she was the youngest chaser in a century. Harry laughed and told her that he played seeker himself. She told him happily about meeting Ron and Hermione, and how they defeated a troll that Halloween. Rose even managed to get through the fight with Quirrel without her voice hitching. She explained how she had rescued Ginny in her second year, and how Ginny had developed a hero worship complex because of that, but was still a good friend. Rose didn't notice the shadow that passed over Harry's face at the mention of Ginny. Rose was a bit hesitant to mention Sirius, but relented with Harry's warm and encouraging smile. Harry smiled fondly when Rose spoke Sirius and her adventures in third year, her voice overflowing with love and happiness. Harry vowed then and there to make sure Rose stayed happy.

Surprisingly, there was no Golden Trio at Hogwarts. Their group was made up of four people: Rose, Ron, Hermione, and Ginny. It was a surprise for Harry when he found out that the three of them turned against Rose after finding out that she was named the 4th Champion.

To Harry, everything was the same as his dimension as she told him about her 3rd year, except this time, Ginny had accompanied the group to the Shrieking shack. Rose had stopped both Sirius and Lupin from killing Pettigrew and Pettigrew had gotten away when Lupin had transformed.

The first major difference, other than Rose being a girl, came in the aftermath of the Quidditch World Cup. Instead of Winky using Rose's wand to conjure the dark mark, she had used Ron's wand. You would think someone would be worried and distraught the thought of their wand being used to conjure the Dark Mark, but Ron wasn't. He actually seemed happy with the attention and seemed eager to tell anyone who would listen about it. Harry was sure yet, but at the moment, he had an awful feeling that things were going to be worse for Rose than they were for himself.

Harry couldn't explain it, but after getting to know Rose, he felt an odd connection with her. At first, he had thought it was maybe because she was his alternate self, but he wasn't exactly sure. He thought it was perhaps sibling love, as she could be her sister, but even that didn't feel right. All he knew was that he had an overwhelming desire to keep her happy and safe.

"You know, this probably won't make any sense, but it feels like I've known you all my life," Rose whispered in a soft caring voice as she smiled up at Harry warmly. Today had become the happiest day of her life, and not even the thought of having to put up with the entire jealous and envious school could have dampened her feelings.

"Me too," said Harry a little remorsefully as he couldn't help but feel guilty for lying to the little red head.

As the two sat next to each other in comfortable silence by the lake, they watched the squid swim lazily across the surface and play with some students from the castle. Before they knew it, the sky was turning dark and the sun was at the brink of the horizon, about to

disappear. Neither had said a word for an hour while both were comfortable just sitting next to each other. While Rose was snuggled against Harry's shoulder, Harry was busy thinking about his situation.

Compared to the dimension he came from, he really didn't mind living in this one where no one would bother him because he wasn't The Boy Who Lived anymore. He was just some everyday wizard. In his original world, almost everything around him was in ruin. His long standing friendships with Ron and Hermione eventually collapsed; Ron because of jealousy and Hermione because of stress. The three of them went their separate ways. Harry began to wander, looking for power and help defeating Voldemort. Hermione became a recluse, simply studying spells and magic theory. Ron was perhaps the worst. He gave in to Riddle's promises and joined the death eaters. Eventually, their paths crossed again. It was horrible...

Hermione was raped and murdered by Ron when he discovered that she did not have any feelings for the red head. Instead, she had unreciprocated love for Harry. Despite it all, Harry still loved his friends, and Ron's betrayal cut him deeply. With Ron's betrayal and Hermione's death known to the Order, Harry's relationship with was the next relationship to collapse. The stress of having lost two of her best friends, one of whom was family, finally made her snap. She and Harry had a fight, and she screamed that everything was his fault. She even went so far to say that his parents and Sirius deaths were his entire fault as well.

When things had finally calmed down, she had tried her best to reconcile their relationship, but Harry did not want to put up with her excuses. He knew she had only said those mean words in a fit of anger and stress, but her words were really painful. He shook his head, trying to banish the depressing thoughts away. He really didn't want to think about Ginny right now. Besides, this new dimension offered a fresh start, and a new, but not unwelcome responsibility.

Looking down at Rose, he noticed that she had fallen asleep on his shoulder. 'Poor girl, I bet she wasn't able to sleep well with the thought of being friendless.' Harry thought, remembering how the red head had black rings around her eyes. He himself had lost sleep in his fourth year when Ron turned his back on him.

“Hey Rose, wake up.” He said in a soft whisper. “I think you might need to go back to the castle.”

Harry smiled softly at how Rose had rubbed her eyes with the back of her hand. “Whazzat?” She mumbled, snuggling closer into his side with a cute little grunt. “I don’t wanna...”

Harry couldn’t blame her for feeling comfortable with him. When he had been in his 4th Year, he would have been happy to discover that he had a living magical relative. He wouldn’t have wanted to part with a relative who he had just met for a short while either.

“Rose, come on, wake up,” said Harry. “You’ve got to get back to the castle.”

“Don’t want to,” she whined softly as she pulled away from him and began stretching.

Harry finally noticed just how thin and bony Rose really was. Her robes hung loosely from her gaunt frame, and Dudley’s cast off did nothing to help. ‘Was I really that skinny and bony at her age?’ thought Harry realizing that she should be at the age where she was starting mature physically. ‘Then again, she was malnourished for so long, she is probably going to remain skin and bone all her life unless I...’

“Hey Rose, how often do you eat at the Dursleys?” He said as he looked at her with a raised eyebrow. He already knew the reason why, but he had to ask as to not draw suspicion when he helped her. Since he was apparently stuck in this alternate reality and was unsure when or if he was to return, needed to get together a plan to help her.

Rose glanced at Harry nervously. She noticed he was looking at her appraisingly, though not in a perverted way, but in a way Mrs. Weasley would to make sure she was eating well or not. Deciding to tell the truth, she spoke in a soft voice. “I told you before, the Dursleys don’t like me. So they don’t really feed me that well and I am treated as...”

“I understand,” Harry said making a placating gesture with his hands. “Would you like to get into shape?”

Rose frowned slightly at this. She didn't know how to take that statement. "As in working out?" she asked hesitantly.

"Something liked that, but what I'm talking about is, if you follow my directions closely, in a month, you'll be as healthy as your everyday fourteen-year-old girl. Maybe even prettier than the rest of your classmates." Harry said. He frowned when he realized what he had just said. "Of course, you're beautiful now Rose, but what I'm trying to say is you look a bit underfed and malnourished. If you follow my directions just right, you'll feel stronger and less tired whenever you run to your classes."

Rose pondered what Harry said. "You said in only a month? How is that possible?" As far as she knew, it took months, not weeks, to get one's self into shape.

"Easy," said Harry stopping in the courtyard. He did not want to draw attention of himself to the public just yet. "I have can make nutrient and vitamin potions. If you eat properly and exercise daily, you'll look so beautiful; you'll put Fleur to shame."

With a giggle, Rose immediately agreed. She was a bit tired of looking like a waif when she was rightfully fourteen-years-old. "I'll do it, when do we start?" said Rose looking at Harry hopefully.

"Tomorrow possibly," Harry said distractedly. He had nowhere to stay and no money at all besides what he had on his person. He was stranded here with only his wand and weapons that were strapped to his inside robes. Luckily, he had shrunken his trunk and it managed to travel along with him to this dimension. "I'll contact you tomorrow before you go to class."

"Okay," she chirped in a warm voice as she gave him a big hug. "Thank you so much, Harry."

Harry returned her hug. "Rose, can you do me a favor?" he asked

"Sure," shrugged Rose.

“Don’t tell anyone about me,” Harry said softly and seriously. “Not even Dumbledore or Sirius. Speaking of Sirius, don’t forget to send him a letter about the Tri-Wizard Tournament.”

“Why?”

“What do you think would happen once everyone finds out that The Girl Who Lives has a cousin who is a Wizard? They are going to hound you and me for questions on where I came from and I really don’t want to be annoyed. You should know it feels to have admirers coming up to you and bothering you with questions or pictures.” Harry said thinking about some of his former classmates in his old dimension.

Rose nodded in understanding. An image of the Creevey brothers popped in her head. “Yeah, now since you mention it, it makes sense,” Rose grumbled softly at the memories of Valentines day and how so many guys had tried to ask her to go out with them because she was The Girl Who Lived. She had received so many letters last year, almost all the Owls in the Great Hall that morning was their for her.

“Now, for the reasons why I don’t want you to tell Sirius, is because he has a knack at being a bit to curious and should remain in hiding, not wandering around in broad day light when all of the Aurors in the Wizard World are given orders to cast first, ask questions later,” Harry spoke softly at the thought of being able to see his godfather alive again. Even though it had been years since his godfather’s demise from the Veil of Death, he had still missed him terribly. “As for Dumbledore, well, I have a feeling he wouldn’t trust me. I get the feeling that he would mostly likely try to separate us should he find out about me. I’ll be honest with you Rose... The thought of losing you is terrifying. Now that I’ve met you, I don’t think it’ll be easy for me to just abandon you after hearing about those Dursleys, not to mention, just how lovable you are.”

Rose responded by giving him another big hug. Like Harry, she felt the same way. After being able to meet the last surviving family she had left after Sirius, she did not want to let him go. If she had to, she

wouldn't give him up without a fight. "I promise I won't tell them anything," Rose promised.

"Good, because if you do, I won't be able to help you become an Animagus." Harry said tempting her, knowing that it would definitely make her consider not telling anyone.

"Really?" Rose asked excitedly. She always wanted to become an Animagus after hearing about how her father and godfather were.

"Yes," said Harry, with a mischievous smile. "I figure that every Potter should be an animagus. But only if you keep your gob zipped."

"Oh Harry! I promise I won't tell anyone! I swear it!" she said practically strangling him.

"Yeah," said Harry as he tried to pry the excited red head from him. "But first, I need to get you back in shape. You can't turn into an Animagus if you're skin and bone." Rose nodded happily to her cousin. Not only was she able to meet her cousin today, she was going to be an Animagus! "Now off you go," Harry said softly as he nudged her toward the main doors of the castle. "I'll contact you soon."

"Okay," Rose said with a small wave, "Good bye."

"Rose?" He said getting her attention as he had just realized something. Rose stopped in the threshold of the door and turned around. "I have an idea. Do you trust me?" Rose nodded with out hesitation. "Ok then, hold on." Harry pulled his wand and pointed it at Rose's forehead. "*Defero Lonquito*" he muttered, and a small blue rune glowed briefly on her forehead. Harry repeated the spell on himself.

"What...?" Rose started, but Harry interrupted her.

"That spell gives me the ability to speak to you in your mind, and you to talk to me whenever you need to." Harry told her mentally. He didn't mention that it prevented Legimancers from reading her thoughts and gave her an automatic Occulmency barrier. It was a powerful forgotten spell he had discovered on one of his trips to

Egypt. Only exceptionally powerful wizards or witches could cast the spell and there were only a handful of people alive that could even perform it if they *knew* the spell.

“Wow!” Rose shouted. “How do I speak to you?”

“Think what you want to tell me while keeping me in your thoughts.” Harry explained.

Rose’s face screwed up in concentration and her tongue stuck from the corner of her mouth cutely. **“Harry, can you hear me?”** Rose said testing out the mental link.

“I hear you,” He said out loud.

“Wow, that’s so cool,” Rose said excitedly, unable to control her emotions. “So I can contact you anytime I want?”

“Yes, but you will have to see me every two weeks anyway so I can renew the spell on you. This is probably the best way to cheat on a test, don’t you think?”

“You’re right,” said Rose with a giggle as she thought of the possibilities of being able to work her way through any test. Maybe Harry would help her on her exams and possibility her O.W.L.S. next year!

“Anyhow, another thing is, the spell also has its special uses. If you give me permission, I can read some of your thoughts or if you want, I can even see and hear things from where you’re point of view, and visa versa.”

Rose nodded though she didn’t understand at all.

“The only bad thing about this spell is that it takes constant magic when we contact each other. The spell uses the magic of who ever opens the link first, so make sure you close the link right away if you notice you’re tired. Oh, another important thing is the farther we are apart, the more magic is drained. So make sure you use it only when you are in desperate need of advice or something important needs to be said, okay?”

Her only reply was a nod and a hug.

“Now, I need to go and you need to get back inside,” said Harry. He gave her a kiss on the forehead goodbye.

Rose blushed a bright shade of red from the kiss. Though Harry was her cousin and he had only kissed her on the forehead, she felt a tingly, excited feeling all over her body. She tried her best to ignore the feelings she knew to be a crush, but she couldn't help but admire how handsome her cousin looked and how nice he was.

“Bye Harry,” Rose said waving him goodbye glumly as he had walked away. Though it was only for a few seconds, she missed him terribly already.

Chapter 2

Over the next week, Harry noticed he was trapped in a corner.

"I need a new place to stay," Harry muttered to himself. He had rented a room at the Leaky Cauldron with what little money he had, but he did not want to make it his permanent residence. He had no doubt that someone would notice the strange, James Potter look-alike that was staying here, plus, he somewhere secret so he could plan. Though this wasn't his dimension and he had no real business in it, he couldn't stop himself when it came to Rose's safety and Voldemorts demise.

Voldemort was forever his enemy...

He had already made plans when it came to Voldemort's inevitable resurrection. By the time Voldemort would use Rose's blood for his resurrection, all of the Horcruxes would be destroyed, and Voldemort as mortal as the next wizard.

"Don't worry Voldemort. Your time will come to an end soon. Quicker then you may imagine." Harry said with a smirk.

While he did have some money with him, he still needed more, but getting a job was out of the question. He briefly toyed with the idea of pawning off some of the meager possessions that he had managed to bring with him, but that idea was soon discarded. All he had in his trunk were his and Voldemort's wands, a few books, a change of clothes and some scattered potions ingredients. Still, as a phoenix animagus, he has a way to flame teleport that no ward could stop. Harry devised a plan to teleport into known death eater's homes, and rob them blind. It wasn't the most honorable way of making money, but it was effective and made Harry feel good and by the end of that week, he was filthy rich. Harry opened himself a Gringotts bank account as soon as he was able to fleece his stolen goods and deposited all his money in it.

Harry spent the rest of the morning shopping. He needed the ingredients for the nutrient potions for Rose, new clothes and battle gear for them both and he decided to purchase an owl, as Hedwig

didn't make the trip with him. Harry already missed his first and closest friend, though he was pretty sure that Rose had a version of Hedwig at Hogwarts. Harry's owl, a proud eagle owl he named Natasha, perched on his shoulder and preened his hair fondly. It seemed that no one wanted her as she was an older owl at easily four years old, and as such, Natasha was grateful to finally be out of her cage and in the free air. Harry's last stop was to pick up a care package of sorts for Sirius. Even though Harry was sure that Sirius was staying comfortably somewhere in the tropics, it wouldn't hurt to be careful. He purchased some food, a moderate sized tent (two bedroom), and a spare wand.

That afternoon, Harry told Tom, the barkeep at the Leaky Cauldron, that it would be his last night staying there and he ordered a late lunch of fish and chips, and a butterbeer. As he ate, Harry penned a short note to Sirius.

Padfoot,

I'm a friend. I'm not sure that you need any of this, but it never hurts to be careful. Rose sends her love.

He signed it with his self given Marauder name.

Feathers

He quickly gave the package and note to Natasha and sent her out a window with instructions to wait for a reply, and sat down with a copy of the Prophet. What he read nearly made him choke on his drink. There, on the front page, was a headline that read: **Aurors Still Clueless in Robberies**. Quickly scanning the article, it seemed that he hadn't been as discreet as he had hoped. Still, he made sure not to leave any evidence behind, and was pretty sure he wouldn't be caught. That and the ministry had no records about his existence.

Harry then turned to the real estate section. He planned on finding a cheap little cottage in or around Hogsmeade so he could be closer to Rose and Hogwarts. Speaking of Hogwarts, he was awfully worried for Rose after he received a sad, heartbroken letter from her. From what she told him, things were not going well for her.

Dear Harry,

It's been less than a week but I already miss you so much. When are you coming back to visit? I'm soooo lonely here with out my friends. They still won't talk to me. Well, Hermione is now, but she still seems skeptical about it all. It's nice to have someone to talk to again, but I can't help but think about you all the time. It got me in trouble in charms class. We were working on summoning charms and I accidentally summoned the stack of books from underneath Flitwick instead of my ink well. Fortunately I only lost Gryffindor five points.

I miss you terribly, Harry. You cant imagine what it feels like to have the whole school against you, and its not the first time. Remember, I told you about my second year and the basilisk? Everyone except the twins and Hermione again thought I was a dark wizard. Everyone's sneering at me and calling me a fake, especially the Hufflepuffs. Anyway, I have to go. I hope to see you again soon. Write back!

With love, Rose

Though Harry may not have known her for long, Harry's feelings for Rose were mixed. On one hand, he worried about her constantly. On the other, he knew she could take care of herself but didn't want to let her. He wanted to embrace her and protect her from everything. He was hoping it was simply the love for a sibling or something similar, but not having had any siblings, he wasn't sure what that felt like. After the fiasco with Ginny, he didn't want a relationship with anyone anytime soon. Especially not with 'himself'.

Sometimes, relationships were nothing but trouble.

(((o)))

Rose had been in a depressed slump ever since her name had been spit from the goblet and she had been chosen as the fourth champion. She couldn't help but feel how unfair her lot in life was. She hated being The Girl Who Lived and everything that came with it. Why did everything have to happen to her? Not only did she have to deal with her former friends who were jealous, but people badmouthing her behind her back as well. The moment she had entered the Great Hall

on Monday, all conversation ceased and everyone began staring at her.

The younger students were looking at her in awe and worship, but the older classmates... the Slytherins had only hissed her with the usual nicknames and insults, the Ravenclaws were looking at her with a look of distrust, Hufflepuff looked angry, and Gryffindor, her house was looking at her with mostly pride, especially the Weasley twins. She didn't want this though. She hadn't put her name in the goblet.

With a sad sigh, Rose headed over toward her table, looking for an open seat. She noticed that Hermione was glaring at Ron and Ginny about something but none of them made any room for her, and she sat nearest the entrance, as she had all week. The only reason she remained strong was because of the letter she received from Harry that morning. He was sweet and had given her some words of strength.

Dear Rose,

Hey, how are you Rose? Me, I'm busy at the moment. Since I'm here to watch the Tri-Wizard Tournament, I'll have to look for a temporary place to stay or possibly, a home. Maybe actually buy a permanent residence near Hogwarts should you ever want company during Hogsmeade Weekend.

Anyhow, how are things going? Sorry, that was a stupid question. I know things may seem quite hard for you at Hogwarts, but stay strong Rose. You're a Potter and we Potters can handle those idiots who are too blind to see and listen to the truth. Rose, eventually, everyone will realize the danger you are in and that you didn't really want to participate in the Tournament. They will all come to beg you for forgiveness in the end, trust me.

I know what you're thinking. After three years of friendship, why the hell would they turn on me now? Well, let me tell you something Rose, if they can't trust you and value your friendship now, they are not your real friends. True and real friends are people who trust you and believe your words. Those who never doubt you and leave your side, those are people who value your friendship.

Now, as to why I am writing you this letter, I need to tell you some important things. Apparently, it's going to be a busy week for me, so I won't probably be there to help you train and start handling out those 'Health Potions' this week. Give me a week or two and I think I'll be settled in that time. Don't worry Rose. You'll see me at the end of this week. I know you need a friend and a person to talk to, so I'll try my best to be there for you.

I got to go now, Harry...

Rose cheered up a bit when she thought of how understanding Harry was. They had only known each other for a little while, but she trusted him explicitly. There was something about him that told her he would sacrifice his life for her regardless if she told him not to. However, there was also something suspicious about him. Like how he had just popped out of nowhere and claimed to be her cousin. Though she didn't doubt him one bit that they were somehow related seeing how he definitely looked like a Potter, she trusted her instincts first and her instincts told her to be trusting, but wary. Once she finished her lunch, she picked up her bag and made her way to potions. She had double potions that day and was dreading every minute of it. Today was the day that Snape had promised to test their antidotes on them.

Rose shook her head, trying to clear it. She didn't want to think about that greasy git, and instead turned her thoughts back to her cousin. Before she could think more about her new cousin, she was jarred from her musing by a familiar and annoying drawl.

"Hey Potter. Like the badges I made?" sneered Malfoy. He and his gang of thugs blocked her path in the hall, all of them wearing badges. At first, Rose thought they had all joined S.P.E.W. but she glanced closer at the badges and saw that they read, 'Support **CEDRIC DIGGORY**, the **REAL** Hogwarts Champion!'

Rose fought the urge to strangle the little blond ferret as she was already in a bad mood from the cold shoulder Professor Sprout had given her. Today was Friday, the last day of class and the end of the week. She really didn't want to put up with Malfoy right now.

"That's not all they do, Potter, look." said Malfoy loudly. He pressed the badge into his chest and the message upon it vanished, to be

replaced by another one, which glowed in violent green: **POTTER STINKS!** The Slytherins all howled with laughter. Each of them followed their leader like a pack of dogs and all of their badges mirrored the blonde.

Out of the corner of Rose's eyes, she noticed that Hermione and Ron and Ginny deliberately ignoring the preceding. Rose's temper flared at how unfair this situation was as the Slytherins continued to laugh. "Oh, reeeeeal funny, Malfoy." She snapped.

Hermione sighed and stepped up to Rose's side, knowing what was going to follow. Ron and Ginny however stayed in their spot by the wall. "Want one Granger?" Malfoy asked, holding a badge out to her. "Just don't touch my hand now. I don't want it slimed up by a mudblood."

In a flash of movement, Rose had her wand pointed at Malfoy's chest, and he at hers. "Go on then, Potter." Malfoy sneered.

Hermione tugged desperately on Rose's arm. "Rose, it's not worth it. Come on." She begged, and reluctantly, Rose lowered her wand. "Thank you. Now, we don't want to be late for potions..." she said, leading a very angry Rose away from the Slytherins. Hermione cast a scathing glare over at them, then at Ron and Ginny.

Upon reaching the potions room, Rose slumped in her seat and glared sullenly at the front of the room. Of all the low, dirty things to do...

Hermione took a seat next to her. "What was that all about?" she asked.

"You saw the badges," Rose snapped at the other girl. Hermione recoiled at the force of her voice. "Sorry," Rose said, not really sounding like she was. She was glad that Hermione was trying to mend their friendship but she still hadn't forgiven the other girl. Hermione looked down at her potions text on the desk gloomily and muttered an acceptance.

Rose was surprised when a sudden voice spoke in her mind.

“Hey Rose, how are you?”

“Harry!” Rose said out loud in her mind in surprise. She had forgotten that she and Harry had the ability to speak mentally when ever they needed to.

“Oww...” groaned Harry. **“There’s no need to yell.”** A mental image of Harry grabbing his head in pain was sent to her.

“Sorry,” Rose thought apologetically. **“Hey, I thought you were busy?”**

“I was, but I’m done now. All I need to do now is to look for a home here in Hogsmeade. At the moment, I just left the Leaky Cauldron and I’m staying at the Three Broomsticks in Hogsmeade now. Since I’m sitting alone and just drinking butterbeer, I thought about mind whispering to you and seeing how you’re doing.”

Rose was excited at the prospect of having Harry that close by, but the thoughts of her day so far put a damper on her spirits. She proceeded to tell him all about the badges and how Hermione finally took her side again, but before Harry could respond, Snape swept into the room and ordered silence. He cast a cold glare in Rose’s direction.

“That’s Snape huh?” Harry asked. **“The over grown greasy bat you told me about on Sunday?”**

Rose couldn’t stop her giggle at his description of the potions teacher as she had mentioned how awful Snape treated her in the conversation they had the night they met.

“Potter!” roared Snape, snapping her out of her thoughts. **“Do you find something so amusing you need to disrupt my class?”**

“No, sir,” Rose said quietly. She pictured him being eaten by Hagrid’s pet acromantulae, which made Harry to laugh in her mind.

“Ten points from Gryffindor for the disruption then,” Snape sneered as his Slytherins were chuckling at her and flashing their badges.

Rose could only grit her teeth. **“Say Harry, you might have to close the link, I need to concentrate for Potions,”** thought Rose.

“You know, I’m pretty good at potions myself. I could help you if you wanted me to.” Harry offered.

Rose gratefully accepted and she had opened some of her senses to him, hearing and complete vision through her eyes. Right as the class was about to start and Harry was preparing to help Rose show the greasy git up, there was a knock on the dungeon door and Colin Creevey timidly stuck his head in. Harry groaned inwardly as he remembered what was going to happen.

“What is it Mr. Creevey?” hissed Snape, looking at the small Gryffindor threateningly.

“Please sir,” Creevey whimpered pathetically as the Slytherins sniggered and flashed their badges again. “I’m supposed to take Rose Potter upstairs.”

Snape simply sneered. “Ms. Potter, it seems like your boyfriend needs you outside for an emergency.” Snape said in amusement for everyone in the Potions room. The Slytherins burst into laughter at this and Rose was felt her neck heat up with anger.

“Rose, give me control of your voice and body!” demanded Harry. There was no way he was going to let Snape get away with that jab.

Rose didn’t know what Harry meant, but she gladly relented control.

As soon as Harry had control, he stood up. “I think you have been misinformed *Professor*,” Harry said the word ‘Professor’ mockingly. “But Colin is not my boyfriend. I’m sorry that you’re so lonely that you need to make jabs at your students. Maybe if you actually washed your hair once in a while, you might actually get a girlfriend, but I doubt anyone would be interested in *you* Snivellus.” Harry hissed coldly as everyone in the Potions Laboratory went silent at her words.

For the first time ever, Snape actually looked shocked and speechless. His faced showed many different emotions, the only one

many could identify, was clearly anger. His hand was twitching as it was approaching his wand.

"I dare you to pull your wand and hex me Professor," Rose smirked icily in a way which was not like her usual self. "Once you utter a single spell or even think about using Legillimency, I swear, I will have you fired and reported to the Board of Governors so fast, your head would be spinning and even Headmaster Dumbledore would not be able to get you out of Azkaban." She said as she flicked her wand and all of her things went into her rucksack. As she was stepped out of the Potions classroom, she spoke to the shocked and angry looking Professor.

"Maybe, they might even give you a Dementors kiss if I tell them about your little hissing secret," Harry sneered. "C'mon" she snapped. Grabbing Creevey by his arm, she pulled him gently out of the Potions classroom, but not without slamming the door loudly, leaving a silent classroom behind.

An instant later, Harry had let go of his control on Rose who was shocked at what Harry had done with her body.

Creevey, who was silent throughout the whole time, burst into loud and excited laughter from Rose had said to Snape.

"Oh my god, Harry..." she said in shock.

For a moment, Harry thought the red head was going to be angry at him for what he had done, but he was surprised when Rose burst into laughter both outwardly and inwardly.

"Oh Harry, that was so cool! I would never have the courage to do something like that to Snape!" Rose said in her mind when her laughter finally died down.

Harry chuckled mentally, but had calmed down himself. He was sure that what he had just done in the classroom would affect Rose's future here at Hogwarts. He cursed himself inwardly for losing his temper. No doubt Snape's hatred toward Rose would increase ten-fold.

“Sorry Rose,” said Harry, apologetically. “I just got a bit angry seeing how nasty he was treating you. It’s not my fault that I feel a little protective of my cousin.”

Rose sent a mental image of a smile in return. It felt nice having a family member being protective over you. Sure, she had been protected before by her friends and Mrs. Weasley, but Harry’s protection was different. He was a blood relative that cared about her. She had never experienced the feeling of having a real family member being protective of her before.

“It’s okay Harry, but I have some questions. What is Legillimency and what did you mean by having Snape being kissed by a Dementor if the Ministry had a look at hissing little secret?”

Harry, knowing that Rose deserved to know, he decided to tell her. He knew that if he kept her in the dark, he was no better than Dumbledore, the manipulating old bastard. He was eventually planning to tell Rose who he truly was anyway, but not until things calmed down in her life. Clearing his throat through their mental link, he sent an image of himself, wearing Professor like robes. When he spoke, he spoke in a way a teacher would speak to a student.

“Legillimency is the art of mind and memory reading. It is considered a Dark Art in the Wizard World because it can be used to invade people’s mind,” said Harry feeling Rose’s surprise through their link. “The most direct way to perform Legillimency, which is used mainly to forcefully rape someone’s mind and steal memories, is by using a wand and saying the incantation. However, to perform it discreetly without anyone knowing... all a legillimancer needs to do is look directly into your eyes. I don’t know if he has ever used it on you, but I have a feeling that he has. Tell me Rose,” Harry said calmly. “Whenever he stares into your eyes, do you ever get the feeling that he is examining you or that he knows exactly what you’re thinking?”

Rose, who was shocked to hear that there was an ability to read people’s mind simply by looking into their eyes, nodded speechlessly. There were a few dozen times when she had felt the feeling that Harry had just described, once when she had maintained eye contact

with the potions teacher in her second year so Hermione could sneak into Snape's private ingredient stores and many other times throughout her three years in the castle.

"I see," Harry said as he watched several memories flash through Rose's mind. **"He has been using Legillimency on you Rose and I need to tell you that it *is* illegal. Snape could be sent to Azkaban for a long time for simply using it against a person's consent, much less a student. There's a chance he could even get a dementor's kiss from performing it on you, the heroine of the Wizard World."**

Rose didn't care about getting Snape in trouble. All she could think about was this strange mind-reading magic. **"Harry! But... but... is there a way I can block him out of mind? I don't want him to read my mind!"** said Rose, about to go hysterical as Colin Creevey was leading her to an unknown room.

"Don't worry Rose," Harry spoke comfortingly. **"There are ways to block Legillimency. I'll teach you how."**

Rose nodded depressingly and she felt dirty at the thought of Snape being able to sift through her mind and sort through her memories.

"Good luck!" An excited Colin said leaving Rose at the door to the antechamber.

Harry decided to sit back and watch through Rose's eyes as she attended the meeting. Harry remained silent however, because he didn't want to give away more than he should know, lest he make Rose more suspicious than she already was. He was thankful that the upcoming conversation about Snape's forearm had been driven from her thoughts as she entered the room.

Rose blinked in confusion before uncertainly opening the door and entering the chamber. Entering the room, Rose was unsurprised to see some familiar faces and well as some unfamiliar faces. One face caused her to blush, as she had developed a slight crush on him throughout last year.

Cedric Diggory...

Harry, who was feeling these odd emotions, burst into uncontrollable laughter, and rather embarrassed her. And underlying it all, Harry didn't know why, but he felt slightly jealous that Rose liked Cedric.

“Oh, leave me alone Harry!” Thought Rose, her embarrassment coloring her thoughts. **“Shouldn't your magic be running low since we've been communicating for a while?”**

Harry shook his head mentally. **“My magic reserves are pretty big,”** Harry had said in a mocking voice. **“I can chat with you for as long as I want.”** Harry lied smoothly. Honestly, he could only maintain the connection for another couple of hours if he wanted to have enough energy to check out the houses in Hogsmeade. He was simply enjoying Rose's mortification too much.

Inwardly, he found it funny when he had arrived in Hogsmeade a while ago... people were simply speechless when they saw him. He looked almost exactly like James Potter, except he was slightly taller had his mothers eyes. All in all, he cut quite a handsome figure, but he would never say as much. If Hermione or Ginny were around, he was pretty sure they would say he was acting quite modest about his looks. Harry had never been very vain.

Rose however, wasn't paying attention to Harry. She was busy being accosted by Rita Skeeter, the well known Daily Reporter cow.

While Rita was trying to drag information out of Rose, Harry was pondering about what to do with the beetle animagus. He didn't want Rose to through the same humiliation that he had to go through, so he decided he would have to put the reporter in her place after the 'interview' she had with *his* Rose.

He was so engrossed at the thought of scaring the Skeeter, he didn't notice that he had considered Rose to be *his*.

(((o)))

Later, after Harry broke contact with Rose, who was in the middle of ranting about how that blonde veela was putting the moves on Cedric, he followed Rita to her apartment where had gone to retrieve something before heading to the Daily Prophet to publish her 'scoop.'

It didn't take much to scare the witch senseless. Harry simply changed his eye color a hazel and masqueraded as the ghost of his father. He confronted her as she left the apartment building and threatened to reveal her animagus form to the public if she published her article about 'his' daughter. No doubt every wizard and witch in the wizard world would try their best to kill every green beetle they saw. If that didn't stop her, Harry threatened to then leak the same info to the ministry, and Rita paled at that threat. The ministry didn't take illegal animagi lightly and Rita didn't have many friend there.

Not to mention, he would haunt her till the end of her days, never leaving her a moment of peace...

Plus, he would make sure she would be placed under a dementors watch, for all eternity.

He left a hysteric and crying Rita Skeeter behind as had flashed his hazel eyes red and had scared her even more by melting into the shadows, making sure the last thing she saw, was his cold threatening red eyes.

Meanwhile...

While Harry was busy dealing with Rita Skeeter, Rose was having her own problems since Dumbledore had called her to his office about the disrespect she showed to the potions professor. "You wanted to see me Headmaster?" Rose said avoiding the Headmaster's eyes. Harry had told her he heard from his guardian that the headmaster used legillimency to read a person's mind and she didn't doubt it one bit as she remembered the feeling of him 'reading' her during the night her name was picked out of the Goblet of Fire.

Though Harry did tell her that she was temporarily safe, as his mind link spell would prevent any intrusion, she was still weary of the old man, as Harry had called him.

"Good afternoon Rose and yes, I wanted to see you." Dumbledore said pleasantly. "Would you like a Lemon Drop?" He asked first.

Rose shook her head, 'no'. Another thing Harry had warned her about was how the headmaster laced his candy with cheering and truth serum. The person eating the lemon drop wouldn't expect anything was amiss, as they were feeling too cheerful as they happily spilled all their secrets.

"Very well Rose," Dumbledore had softly said as his twinkle dimmed slightly with her negative reply. Usually, she would happily accept candy from the Headmaster. "I was informed a while ago from Professor Snape that you had deliberately insulted him and had mocked him. Is this true?"

"Harry!" Rose said in panicky voice. **"I need help! The Headmaster is confronting me!"**

"Give me temporary control," said Harry as he had shifted his magic to be drained instead of Rose's. From what he observed, Rose would be drained in five to ten minutes should she continue to open the link as she was hungry and weary.

"What did you just do?" questioned Rose when she felt her magic shift around.

"I'm making it so my magic is drained instead of yours," said Harry. He was currently somewhere in Wales looking for one of Voldemort's horcruxes. **"You're hungry and tired at the moment. You won't be able to keep the link up for much longer than ten minutes or so, so I'll let my magic be drained instead."**

Rose's eyes closed briefly as Harry took control. When she reopened them, she spoke. "I don't deny it Professor," Harry said looking the older man in the eye. Harry felt a discreet legillimency attempt and Harry gladly fed it false information and feelings of anger and distrust.

"I'm disappointed in you, Rose," Dumbledore said. He masked his surprise at Rose's hostility toward him.

"As I am with you and Professor Snape, Headmaster," Harry said coolly. Dumbledore's eyebrows rose minutely at his sharp tone.

The Headmaster wasn't the only person surprised. The portraits and Rose herself were shocked at Harry cold voice. "I am disappointed to hear that Hogwart's own headmaster and his employees would use legillimency on defenseless students. You do know that is considered an illegal act, Headmaster?" Harry said, immediately erecting his occlumency barriers inside Rose's mind. Dumbledore's mask of calm finally slipped at this, and the shock registered in his eyes.

"Harry, what are you doing?" Rose shouted. She tried to eject Harry from her body but Harry wrestled control back. He had a few things to say to Dumbledore if he was going to get him to back down.

"I'm setting him straight. I won't let him use the guilt trip on you or let Professor Snape get away with things he shouldn't be doing. If he doesn't start doing things fair, the best way to set him straight is to threaten him. And as sad as this seems, I have to resort to this. He needs to know that you're a capable woman in your own right, and he needs to stop letting Snape, and you for that matter, do what you please. This is the only way I can see to get the point across."

"It's not like he lets me get away with things," Rose protested weakly.

"How many times should you have been expelled in the past three years?" Harry asked simply. **"Snape treats Malfoy the same way."**

Rose was speechless at her cousin's words and just how right he was. For the past three years, she was pretty sure she should have been expelled at some point, but the headmaster was constantly bailing her out of trouble and smoothing things over with the offended parties. She couldn't keep letting Dumbledore treat her as he had been. It would simply mean that she was a hypocrite complaining to her friends, as the headmaster had clearly favored her as Snape had obviously favored Malfoy.

"You're... you're right," Rose said quietly. Things were simply going too fast for her and she was almost overwhelmed. Ever since she had met Harry, her life was changing. She wasn't sure if it was for the

better or not, but she decided she would be more cautious around Harry. Something definitely wasn't right with him.

She had always held the Dumbledore in the highest esteem, but being told that Dumbledore had read her mind at times made her weary of him.

While Rose sank deeper in her thoughts, Harry, who was controlling her body and voice, stared at a truly shocked Dumbledore. "When did you learn occlumency, Rose?" Dumbledore asked quietly as the office stilled.

"Just recently Headmaster. I found a book on it while I was looking through the library trying to find out how someone got my name in the goblet of fire. And, no professor, I don't use legillimency on anyone. I'm afraid I don't have any talent in that field; just occlumency. I'm not quite sure, but I think it's one of the talents that Voldemort had given me when he gave me this," Harry said, lifting Rose's fringe a bit and showing her scar. "But back to the subject about your Potions Master. I'm sick of the obvious hatred he shows me and the fact that you have done nothing to stop it or his show of favoritism to his house."

"Rose..." Dumbledore said, trying to placate the fuming girl. He was still speechless that the child in front of him knew occlumency, not to mention that she was a natural. "I did not know anything of Snape favoring his house."

"I'm sure..." Harry said sarcastically, knowing full well Dumbledore was lying. Dumbledore was claiming that for the past ten years Snape had been teaching, he had not known a thing? "I find that odd, as you are the Headmaster and I've been hearing that nothing is able to sneak by you. I wonder what the board of governors would say when I, The Girl Who Lived tell them that the headmaster of Hogwarts hired a biased potions master that has ruined many students promising futures and yet turned a blind eye to it. Please don't tell me you do not know of Professor Snapes favoritism his own house. I am not *that* ignorant."

Dumbledore wondered what had happened to the girl in front of him to make her speak to him this way. She was down right hostile. "Rose, you are dismissed. I will handle this matter and look through it more

thoroughly.” He needed to clear his mind to figure out Rose Potter’s sudden hostile attitude and natural mastery of occlumency. “As for punishment for back talking to your Potions teacher, twenty-five points from Gryffindor.”

Harry nodded in acceptance and turned toward the door, but as she was about to step out, she left a hollow threat behind. *“You know, Professor... I heard from the guest students from Beauxbatons that their school is quite nice. I might try and transfer there since this school is obviously not fair and I seem to be in danger every year.”* Harry had said in French. Harry knew that Dumbledore knew French.

She closed the door without another word and Dumbledore was left surprised yet again.

Relenting control, Harry was immediately chastised by Rose and he could feel her confusion from his conversation with Dumbledore.

“Okay Harry, everything is simply going to fast for me here,” she said seriously through their mind link. She slumped exhaustedly against the wall and began to massage her temples. **“The Tri-Wizard Tournament, me being chosen as Champion, my friends betraying me, you appearing, Snape, the Headmaster, and just witnessing myself tell off Snape and the Headmaster. This is all going so fast, I can’t... there are so many things I don’t understand and so many things I don’t want...”** Rose babbled, unable to stop the tears that came unbidden to her eyes.

Harry fell silent through the link and suddenly felt remorseful for what he had Rose do. He knew it was time to tell her the truth. He really didn’t want to tell her who he really was until things finally calmed down, but he didn’t have a choice now. She was so confused, distraught, lost, and unsure of what to do, and he couldn’t blame her for crying. She had been chosen as the fourth champion of the Tri-Wizard Tournament, her friends had abandoned her, she discovered that her most hated teacher and favorite teacher both were able to read her thoughts and memories, and lastly, she had met a lost member of her family; himself.

He really didn’t want to hide from her in the first place, he realized offhandedly. Considering that she was technically a female Harry, he

knew that she hated having things kept from her. Just like when Dumbledore finally revealed the prophecy to him, Harry was sure of what Rose's reaction would be. It was fair game, though, and Rose deserved to know who he truly was, not just a cover story. He didn't want to be hypocrite.

“Rose, I think I’m going to have to explain something to you. Maybe then, it will ease your mind a bit.” Harry said softly through the mind link. He added a burst of calm and comfort. **“Meet me tonight at nine in the shrieking shack. Make sure you bring your marauder’s map and invisibility cloak.”**

Rose simply nodded, but inwardly, she was surprised that he knew about the marauder's map and invisibility cloak, having never even mentioned it to him. She had even left them out when she was telling him about her time at Hogwarts. There were some things she had wanted to keep a secret for herself. She immediately began to wonder what Harry had wanted to tell her, but Harry simply told her not to be late and closed the link.

Chapter 3

Rose's face burned with embarrassment and anger as she stormed her way back to the Gryffindor common room. Hogwarts being what it was, the news that 'she' had told off the greasy potions professor has spread like wildfire through the rumor mill and not long before dinner, everyone knew. While the Gryffindors and Ravenclaws seemed proud of her, the Hufflepuffs remained put out because of the tournament and the Slytherins shot scathing glares her way. Rose ducked her head to avoid looking at anyone. The realization that something as simple as telling Snape off could sway peoples opinions made her feel queasy.

She came across a sniggering group of Slytherins blocking the hallway and she toyed with her wand, glowering at them all the while. The students quickly made way for her to pass and she did so without a second glance. She had to thank Harry later for teaching her how to intimidate people, if indirectly. While Harry was using her body to berate Snape and Dumbledore, she was inwardly aware of what he was doing and she could easily mimic the looks and posture Harry used. It worked wonders at getting people to leave her alone. She couldn't wait to ask Harry if he could teach her how to 'properly' intimidate.

"I wonder what he wants to tell me tonight. Maybe he can explain what's happening here." Rose muttered to herself as she crawled through the portrait hole. The common room was packed full of Gryffindors. All conversation ceased and everyone turned to look at her. Then, everyone began to applaud and cheer for her. She really didn't want to put up with the attention right now, especially not the twins, who were badgering her for first-hand information, so she quickly excused herself and hurried up the stairs to the girls' dorm. Rose quickly shut the door behind her with a grateful sigh and rested her forehead against it.

"Rose," Hermione said sternly from behind her.

"Yes?" Rose's voice was flat and emotionless and she didn't turn around to face Hermione. Inwardly, she was happy to see Hermione

again, and even more so that Hermione had stood with her against Malfoy earlier that day. Rose hoped that Hermione was here to actually apologize, as she hadn't yet.

"I can't believe you said those things to Professor Snape! How could you? He's your teacher!"

'Of course not...' Rose thought, at Hermione's scolding tone. "So?" Rose shot back. Did you really expect me to respect the man that has treated me like rubbish since I started here?"

Hermione opened her mouth to retort, but Rose was already fired up and didn't let Hermione say anything before continuing. "And who are *you* to scold me, Granger?" she hissed waspishly. "You're not my teacher and I've already been scolded by the Headmaster, so shut your trap and mind your own business you backstabber. You think you can turn your back on me then come crawling back any time you feel like it? NO! It doesn't work like that."

Hermione flinched and recoiled with the red head's rant. Properly cowed, Hermione murmured an apology and left the room, tears shimmering in her eyes.

Rose shook her head at her former friend's retreating back. What the hell was Hermione acting hurt for? She had been the one that abandoned Rose and stayed with Ginny and Ron. Rose didn't have anyone anymore. If Hermione was trying to become friends again by scolding her, their friendship was not going to be reconciled anytime soon.

"Prats," Rose said not really meaning it. She really did miss her friends.

(((o)))

Harry threw the hood of his cloak over his head and cast a few obscuration charms as he walked down the dark passage into Knockturn Alley. Since he was going to reveal who he truly was to Rose, he felt it best to do so with a pensieve and veritaserum as back up. Unfortunately, he had neither, and where a pensieve was easy enough to come by, most of the ingredients to brew the potion were

under heavy ministry control. In order to buy them legally, a witch or wizard had to have proper authorization from the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. A short cut to that would be to simply purchase a pre-made potion, but in order to do both of that, he would have to do some shopping in Knockturn Alley. Harry knew just the shop to visit.

In the previous dimension, Harry discovered a little out of the way apothecary in a dark corner of Knockturn Alley when he needed to interrogate a Death Eater he captured. In a sharp contrast to the atmosphere of the alley itself, the shop was clean and well maintained and the owner, one Mathias Elderberry, was a pleasant middle aged man who simply couldn't afford rent for his shop in Diagon Alley. He and Harry became fast friends and Mathias vowed to help Harry with whatever he needed in his fight against Voldemort. Harry could only hope that Mathias was the same person here in this dimension. Hell, Harry hoped that Mathias even owned the store, if it was even there.

Harry followed the twisting maze of alleyways before coming to a stop in front of a small sign that read, "Elderberry's Reagents". Stepping tentatively into the small shop, Harry was relieved to find Mathias seated comfortably behind the cash counter reading the days Prophet. He looked just like Harry remembered, his fly away dark hair was peppered with grey and he still sported a well trimmed goatee. Mathias' brown eyes were as sharp as ever and before Harry had the chance to make his presence known, Mathias greeted him.

"Hey there stranger," Mathias called from behind his paper. "Have you been reading the paper lately?"

"No," Harry answered cautiously. He was still unsure of Mathias in this dimension. He figured that the best way to gauge him would be to hold a conversation. "Anything interesting?"

Mathias chuckled and put the paper down before smiling at Harry. "Not really. Just more Death Eaters whining about having their houses pillaged. If you ask me they're getting what they deserve" Harry was momentarily taken aback at Mathias' outward stance against the dark. It seemed that Mathias could read his expression through the

obscuration field over his face and laughed again. "Don't worry. I know you're not a death eater. My wards told me when you entered my shop. Anyway, what can I do for ya?"

Harry mentally slapped himself. He had forgotten about the wards. It was a good thing he didn't carry the dark mark, otherwise he would have been stunned and most likely woken up in prison. Now that the pleasantries were out of the way, Harry was glad that Mathias was the same person here. He felt he could trust Mathias with his identity, if not name, and pushed the hood back, revealing his face. Mathias' eyes widened momentarily but he quickly quashed the surprise. "I need some veritaserum," Harry stated. "And I don't have time to brew any. Do you have any in stock?"

"What makes you think I would carry any of that?" Mathias said curiously.

Harry simply raised an eyebrow at the older man, as if saying, "Are you telling me you don't?"

Mathias chuckled again. "You seem to be well informed then, young..." he trailed off waiting for Harry to introduce himself.

"Harry," he said, extending his hand for a shake. Best to keep his last name a secret for as long as possible.

Mathias took Harry's hand and shook it warmly. "Mathias Elderberry," he said jovially. "How many vials do you need? Just the one?" Harry nodded and Mathias retreated into his office. Harry could hear him rummaging around back there and Mathias returned with a stoppered vial with what looked like water in it. He handed it to Harry, who poured a single drop on the counter before sprinkling a pale blue powder on it. The drop fizzled with violet sparks and Harry nodded satisfactorily. Mathias looked at him curiously.

"A test," Harry stated simply. "It looks tastes and smells like water. I would be easy enough to simply sell me a vial of water and call it veritaserum."

Mathias nodded in understanding. "So, it'll be ten galleons then." Harry pulled the amount from his money bag and handed it over and

heading for the door to the shop. "Mind me asking what you plan on using the serum for?"

Harry stopped at the door and turned with a cryptic smile. "No, I don't mind you asking. Doesn't mean I'll answer though." Mathias laughed and Harry waved goodbye. "Take care, Mathias."

As Harry left the shop, he put his hood back up and reapplied the obscuration charms. He planned on stopping by Ollivander's to pick up a spare wand, as it wouldn't do to be seen with a copy of the girl-who-lived's wand. No sooner had Harry turned toward the exit to knockturn alley did he notice he was surrounded. While he was lost in his thoughts, six men came from the shadows and began circling Harry like a pack of wolves. Harry was instantly on his guard and his hand clenched tightly over his wand.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here?" asked a raspy, bark like voice from behind him. Harry whirled and was instantly enraged. "Seems a stranger has trespassed into our alley."

'Pack of wolves indeed,' Harry thought bitterly. Encircling him was none other than Fenrir Greyback and his personal pack of werewolves. Harry's eyes flashed maliciously as he thought back to when he was seventeen. He remembered the failed attack at Riddle manor where Fenrir and Remus had fought. Remus fought valiantly but Fenrir had the upper hand and more experience and in the end, Remus nearly had his throat ripped out by the evil wolf. Luckily he had survived, but just barely.

The other five werewolves began to snicker. They stopped circling Harry but Fenrir continued moving. "See, I don't know you, wizard, and I never forget a scent." He explained. "Me and my pack haven't had much fun lately, so you, a nobody happens along and...well...I think you understand where I'm goin' with this."

Harry simply glared at him from under his hood. "Nothing to say then?" Fenrir taunted. Harry really didn't have anything to say, as his mind was totally caught up in visions of revenge against the man who nearly killed his last remaining link to his parents. It didn't matter that it was a different Fenrir, or that he had already killed the werewolf responsible for Remus' death; Harry was caught up in his hatred all

over again. Then, as Fenrir lunged forward, Harry leveled his wand and murmured a curse under his breath.

“*Crucio...*”

Instantly, Fenrir fell to the ground and began writhing and screaming in absolute pain, such was the force of the curse. The other five werewolves stepped forward to assist their alpha, but with a wave of his hand they were all frozen in place. “Stay where you are,” Harry had hissed in a dark, cold voice. Inwardly, he knew he should kill the werewolf right now for all the evil he would commit in the future, but now was not the time to attract the Ministry’s attention. Still, it wouldn’t hurt to have a bit of fun.

Ignoring the gathering crowd, Harry lifted the pain curse on Fenrir and wordlessly summoned a huge python. “*Bind the werewolf, but do not kill him,*” Harry hissed in parseltongue. The gathered crowd all began muttering amongst themselves about how the Dark Lord had returned. Many of them fled, but a few began to look upon Harry with adoration. Harry laughed silently to himself, thinking this could work to his advantage. He could find the whereabouts of any loyal death eaters and hunt them down before Voldemort could call them back, in case his plan went awry.

The python hissed menacingly as it wrapped Fenrir in its coils and clacked its jaws together near his head. “P-please... w-wait, my lord,” Fenrir simpered in fear. “Don’t kill me.” Everyone watching was taken aback at the sight of the ruthless Fenrir Greyback pleading for his life.

Harry hissed a command in parseltongue and the python loosened its coils enough for the werewolf to breathe. Harry crouched down near him and sneered coldly. “Tell me, Greyback, whom among my followers is still loyal to me?” Harry hissed, releasing an aura of darkness.

Fenrir whimpered like a kicked puppy and kissed the hem of Harry’s robes. Inwardly, Harry was disgusted by this act but didn’t show it. “I-I have remained loyal, my Lord,” Fenrir groveled.

“Whom else...?”

Fenrir remained silent, and Harry snapped angrily at him. “Well, speak, dog!”

Fenrir cringed and covered his head. Harry wondered what Voldemort had done to the werewolf to inspire such fear. “I’m sorry, my Lord, I don’t know!” he whined.

Harry sighed outwardly and inwardly. So much for his grand plan... “You disappoint me, Greyback,” Harry hissed. With a wave of his hand, the python vanished in a puff of smoke. “You are lucky I don’t have time to deal with your incompetence today, else I would kill you.” Fenrir cringed again. “Go into hiding till I contact you.” Harry lifted the curse from the other five werewolves and watched as they and Greyback fled into the bowels of the alley.

With one last glare at the gathered crowd and a swish of his cloak, Harry left the alley himself. He had a satisfied smirk on his face. That had been fun, and Harry couldn’t wait to see tomorrow’s Prophet.

(((o)))

That night, Rose left the common room at eight thirty to get her invisibility cloak and map for her meeting with Harry in the shrieking shack. It took her a bit to finally find them but, she eventually did. Throwing the cloak over her head and activating the map, Rose headed toward the door, but stopped when she heard a tapping on the dorm window. Cautiously she walked over and opened it, and a barn owl flew in, landing on a post of her bed. Recognizing the owl as the same one she sent to Sirius, she hurried over and untied the letter from the owl’s leg. The owl stayed on the bed post waiting on a reply.

Rose hastily opened the letter and was overjoyed to recognize Sirius’ handwriting.

Rose,

I can’t say everything I would like to in this letter. It’s too risky in case the letter is intercepted. We need to talk face-to-face. Can you ensure that you are alone by the fire in Gryffindor Tower at one O’clock in the morning on the 22nd of November?

I know better than anyone that you can look after yourself and while you're around Dumbledore and Moody, I don't think anyone will be able to hurt you. However, someone seems to be having a good try if they are risking themselves face to face with Dumbledore.

Be on the watch Rose, I still want to hear about anything unusual. Let me know about the 22nd of November as quickly as you can.

Sirius

Rose smiled at the thought of talking with her godfather again. She missed him terribly and hoped he was doing well. Scribbling a quick reply to him, she told him as much, and also told him that she would be by the fire on the 22nd of November. Finally, after hiding the letter from Sirius in her trunk, she threw the invisibility cloak over herself once more and activated the map again.

As she hurried from the castle, Rose's mind wandered to what she and Harry would discuss that night. She could only hope it would be good.

(((o)))

"Harry?" Rose called as she opened the trap door into the house. She shivered slightly and wished she had brought a jumper with her, as it was rather chilly this evening. Looking around the room that had been built for Remus' 'furry little problem' she didn't see anyone. She did finally hear faint music drifting down the stairs from the upper floor. Climbing the stairs, she recognized the instrument being played as a flute. The song was a haunting and sad melody that reminded Rose of loss and loneliness.

Still, the music was beautiful and almost mesmerizing. Rose followed the sound to a closed door on the second floor. When she opened the door, she was surprised to find that the room had been cleaned and repaired, and a cozy fire was crackling in the hearth, making the room feel warm and comfortable. On a scarlet leather couch by the window sat Harry, playing a silvery flute. He had his eyes closed and Rose waited patiently for Harry to finish the tune.

“Right on time, Rose,” Harry said, pulling the flute from his lips, and setting it in his lap. The fire light twinkled off of the polished metal surface

“That was beautiful,” Rose said softly. Her eyes were drawn to the silvery instrument in his hands. “I didn’t know you played.”

Harry smiled at the red head sadly and said, “Thank you. I find playing helps me organize my thoughts.”

Rose tore her gaze away from the flute when Harry gestured for her to have a seat next to him on the sofa. In front of the sofa was a small table on which sat a large soapstone bowl.

“First things first; do you know what this is?” Harry asked, pointing to the bowl that was engraved with runes. Inside the bowl, there was a bunch of swirling silvery liquid. Seeing the confusion on Rose’s face, Harry explained. “This is a pensieve. It lets you store and review memories, kind of like a movie.” He said, knowing that Rose would understand the muggle reference. “If you’re anything like me, it’s easier to see things than simply having them explained to you.” Harry reached out took Rose’s hand gently. “Ready?”

Not knowing what to expect, Rose simply nodded with a giddy smile on her lips. ‘Harry’s holding my hand,’ she thought. She was surprised when Harry waved his other hand over the bowl and the silvery liquid began to swirl and the surface began to clear. “Just try and keep any questions till after we’re done with the memories, okay?” Looking in the bowl, she could see what was clearly the stairway at number 4, Privet drive. Before she had a chance to ask about it, Harry leaned forward and the two of them plunged their way into the memory.

She felt a falling sensation before she was roughly deposited upright on the hardwood flooring in the entry hall of the Dursley’s house. She staggered a bit and gave Harry a grateful smile when he steadied her. “The first time is always rough,” he explained. “Now, watch.”

Rose turned her attention back to the memory, wondering how and why Harry was showing her one of her own memories. Unsure what the date of the memory was, she peered into the kitchen and noticed

that it was five twenty eight a.m. If she remembered correctly, Aunt Petunia would be coming down stairs any minute now to wake her and force her to make breakfast for her whale of a cousin. Rose felt her neck and cheeks heat up with embarrassment; she really didn't want Harry to see this. She tugged on his sleeve to get his attention. "Harry, I really don't-"

But Harry cut her off. "Just watch," he insisted gently.

Rose looked pensively back at the memory and sure enough, her aunt stormed down the stairs and took the padlock off of the cupboard beneath them. Rapping harshly on the door, Petunia called, "Wake up boy. You need to make breakfast for my Diddy-kins." The cupboard door opened and Rose expected to see a younger version of her self clamber out, but she was shocked to see not a young girl, but a young boy with messy black hair and green eyes, sporting a familiar lightning bolt shaped scar on his forehead.

She looked up at Harry with a question on her lips but Harry simply shook his head. "Keep the questions in your mind for when we're done here. Remember that memories cannot be altered or faked." Rose nodded hesitantly and turned back to where memory-Harry had just finished stretching. Memory-Harry stepped glumly into the kitchen and Harry guided Rose with a steady hand to follow. The two of them watched as Petunia berated memory-Harry for overcooking the bacon, or making more of a mess than he had to for a few minutes before the atmosphere clouded. Rose panicked, not knowing what was happening.

"It's alright." Harry said, wrapping a comforting arm around the girl. "We're just moving to the next memory."

As soon as he said that, the scene was replaced with the familiar sight of Petunias flower garden and a slightly older memory-Harry was stubbornly tugging on a tough weed. The weed evidently had some thorns on it, because memory-Harry cried out and stuck a bleeding finger in his mouth. "Stupid plant," he said, stomping roughly on the offending weed. Rose held her own finger out and examined it. She remembered pricking her finger while trying to pull the stubborn plant out and cutting her self on a thorn. She still had the small scar.

Harry took Rose through a few more of his childhood memories, ranging from being forced over to Mrs. Figg's while his aunt and uncle took Dudley to an amusement park, to his bouts of accidental magic and Dudley's gangs games of 'Harry Hunting', all the way up to the trip to the zoo, where Harry had inadvertently released the Burmese Python. "Look familiar?" Harry asked a wide eyed Rose.

Rose simply nodded, unable to tear her eyes away from the imagery in the pensieve. To say she was confused would be an understatement. She didn't know what exactly she was seeing, but her first thought was that Harry had modified her memories. But, didn't Harry say that memories couldn't be altered? She turned toward Harry to ask a question, but the scene shifted again. "Hold on," he said. "We're not nearly done yet."

The next scene the pensieve presented was of a dingy shack on a rocky island out at sea. Rose recognized it as the night that her first friend ever, Hagrid, had shown up and taken her away from the Durselys. She watched as the scene played out in front of her, only it was Harry going through exactly what she had experienced, even Hagrid giving Dudley a curly pigs tail. She couldn't help but smile at that memory. She watched as Hagrid took memory-Harry to Diagon alley for the first time ever, and smiled remembering her trip there. She watched Hagrid hand over a familiar cage with a familiar owl in it over to a beaming memory-Harry. Unable to keep the question from escaping she asked Harry, "Hedwig?"

"I miss her terribly," he said sadly. Rose nodded in understanding, though she was still rather confused. If she was ever separated from her owl, she didn't know what she would do, but she knew it would hurt. She hoped her Hedwig was doing alright.

The scene fogged again, and this time was replaced by the familiar image of the Great Hall at Hogwarts. She watched as memory-Harry walked timidly toward the stool, where Professor McGonagall was waiting patiently to put the battered sorting hat on his head. Rose could hear the murmurs and whispering going on around them and could sympathize with the meek little boy in the memory. She had felt the exact same way. Memory-McGonagall put the enormous hat over memory-Harry's head and Harry began to explain. "At this point,

as I'm sure you're catching on to; I was doing my damndest to convince the hat not to sort me into Slytherin."

Rose nodded again as the hat called out in a loud voice, "Gryffindor!" and a beaming memory-Harry walked over to the Gryffindor table and sat down next to a happy Ron, while the Weasley twins began to sing, "We got Potter!" over and over. The scene shifted once again, and Rose watched as her first year was replayed in front of her, only with Harry as the lead instead of herself. She watched as memory-Ron and memory-Harry saved memory-Hermione from the troll, watched as memory-Harry was nearly thrown from his broom in his first quidditch match, and as Harry saw his parents in the Mirror of Erised. She recoiled slightly and stared up at Harry when she recognized them as *her* parents, and a vague understanding began to form in her mind. She then watched him defeat Voldemort-possessed Quirrel in front of the mirror and save the philosophers stone.

Simply by watching the few memories they had been through, Rose had a multitude of questions she wanted, no *needed* to ask Harry, but she held them in. They then spent the next couple of hours watching everything Rose had done be experienced by a younger Harry. She gasped as Hermione was petrified by the basilisk and cried as Harry begged Ginny not to die in the Chamber of Secrets, and smiled fondly as memory-Harry conjured his Patronus, Prongs for the first time. She couldn't help but be filled with joy as she watched memory-Hermione and memory-Harry save Sirius and Buckbeak from death in their adventures with the timeturner, though she was a bit confuse as to the absence of Ginny.

The scene shifted again and Rose saw her more recent memories of the Tri-Wizard Tournament play in front of her. Harry spoke again, "I'm going to let you see all of my fourth year because it might help you with the tournament, but we won't see any more than that." He said.

"Why?" Rose asked. She noticed a pained expression on Harry's face and wondered what was so horrible about the things that happened after fourth year that hurt him so.

“Because there’s nothing in them that will happen now that I’m here. Now, shush.”

Rose turned back to the memory and nearly screamed. There, in front of her and trying to eat memory-Harry, was an enormous dragon. “I have to fight a dragon!?” she shouted. Harry chuckled slightly at Rose as she gasped at the memory. Rose clapped heartily as memory-Harry swooped down and scooped up the golden egg. As the scene shifted, she turned back to Harry and asked again weakly, “I have to fight a dragon?” Harry simply smiled at her and continued to watch the scene being played out.

The next scene was the second task. Rose made a face as she watched memory-Harry wolf down the slimy gillyweed. Harry took her shoulder and guided her into the memory-lake. Rose panicked initially but relaxed when she could still breathe under water. She glared at Harry for not telling her as much, and Harry laughed again.

The two of them followed memory-Harry down to the merfolk village where floating there serenely were Fleur’s sister, Hermione, Cho Chang, and Ron. They watched as memory-Harry tried to save both Ron and Hermione but was stopped by the merfolk. Rose turned toward Harry with a curious look on her face and Harry explained. They take someone you care about to the bottom of the lake and you have to go save them. Rose nodded and the two of them followed memory-Harry back to the surface as he swam upward with Gabrielle and Ron in his arms. Then the scene shifted again, this time to a hedge maze.

“The third task,” Harry explained, “is a maze with numerous obstacles in it.” The two of them followed memory-Harry as he wound his way through the labyrinth. “There are acromantulae, enchantments, those horrible screwts you’ve been caring for, and even a sphinx in there.” They followed memory-Harry all the way through until he and Cedric were ported away by the cup and Harry ended the memory there. The bowl expelled the two of them back into the room in the shack and Rose looked up at Harry.

“So you won?” she asked hopefully. Her hope was quashed at the anguished expression on Harry’s face. “You lost?”

Harry sighed. "The cup was a port key that took both me and Cedric to a grave yard," he said sadly. "Voldemort was waiting there with Pettigrew and he killed Cedric in cold blood." Rose gasped but Harry continued. "Then, Voldemort used my blood to give himself a body that was immune to the protection that my mum gave me."

There was an uncomfortable silence in the room before Rose broke it. "Our mum," she said softly. Harry looked up from studying his fingernails and nodded. "Harry, what-"

But Harry interrupted her again. "We have one more memory before I'll let you ask any questions." He said, pulling the silvery memories out of the bowl and depositing them back in his head. He then pulled out another memory, but this one was dull, not nearly as silver as the ones previous. Rose guessed that it was a bad memory. Harry put it in the pensieve and stirred it, like he had the others and the memory cleared. Rose could see a lavish but old and rundown manor that somehow looked familiar through the surface, though in the memory, it seemed a battle had taken place here.

Before she had the chance to ask anything, Harry lightly gripped her shoulder and the two of them plunged in.

Chapter 4

Rose felt the falling sensation again before it abruptly ended and she was deposited roughly on her bum on the floor of the mansion. She glared up at Harry who was staring over her head, lost in the memory, and regained her feet. Just as she was about to ask him what was wrong, she heard a hissing voice from behind her.

“Potter,” the voice said maliciously. Turning around quickly, she was shocked speechless for the umpteenth time that night. Standing a few paces away was a monster of a man. His skin was pale and tight against his skeletal frame and his black robes hung loosely from his shoulders. His nose was simply two slits on his face and his red eyes glowed from under his hairless brow. Rose thought he looked like a humanoid snake.

But even more shocking than the monster, was the man he was dueling. It was Harry, but not as Rose knew him. The memory-Harry was older, wearing all black and his face was crisscrossed with scars; the lightning bolt scar bleeding freely down into his eyes. His eyes were glowing a bright green and the two combatants paused in their destructive duel. “You will pay for what you have done to me!” The red eyed snake man snapped. Rose couldn’t help but shiver at the sound of the man’s- no monster’s voice. She knew she should know who he was, but her mind was drawing a blank.

“Voldemort,” memory-Harry spat viciously. Rose gasped in realization. Now she knew where she recognized his voice from. It was the same voice she heard accompanying her parents voices when ever dementors got near her. Despite the proof in front of her, however, she fell deeper and deeper into confusion. When had Harry ever met Voldemort? She wondered. “And you will pay dearly for what you have done to me and everyone I care about. You killed my parents, my friends, and too many others to name. Those acts are unforgivable to me.”

“Indeed,” said silkily. “You have been a thorn in my side for far too long, Harry. I will finish what I started that Halloween many years ago. The Potter line ends today.”

It was like Rose had finally opened a birthday present that she already knew she was getting. She was pretty sure that Harry wasn't her cousin. He wasn't even a brother, but he was still a Potter. No, Harry was more like another version of herself. She now had the what, but she was still missing the why. She could only hope Harry would answer her questions when they were done. With that realization, she turned her attention back to the memory that was playing out in front of her eyes. memory-Harry had his wand calmly pointed at memory-Voldemort's chest and Rose was proud to see that he showed no sign of fear. Then, as if by an unspoken agreement, both wizards lunged at each other. They wielded their wands like swords; red light at the tip of memory-Harry's familiar holly wand, green at the tip of the Dark Lord's.

She couldn't believe how fast and amazing the duel before her was. She truly thought she had been a prodigy at Defense Against the Dark Arts, but the duel she was watching made her realize just how woefully inadequate she really was. The fight was like a dance, and the two extremely powerful wizards fired curses and hexes back and forth, doing more damage to the landscape than each other. Voldemort she expected to use the Dark Arts and did not surprise her as he was of course, a Dark Lord. memory-Harry on the other hand was using a mixture of all kinds of combat. Light magic, dark magic, muggle martial arts, and then her surprise, Harry began apparating while wielding a sword. Memory-Voldemort began to hesitate as memory-Harry would apparate behind him and slash with the sword of Gryffindor, only to disappear to another location and cast a curse at him. Every apparition memory-Harry made was utterly silent, which made her uncertain where he would appear next.

It was clear to Rose that memory-Harry had the upper hand in this fight...

Rose began to wonder, though, why Voldemort didn't simply apparate as well. "Magnificent," hissed Voldemort with something akin to pride in his voice. "You're strong Potter, who would have thought you of all people would dabble in the Dark Arts or be capable of apparating through apparition wards?" he said, answering Rose's unasked question

Harry replied by conjuring a whip made of black flame from the tip of his wand. "You never did find out the rest of the prophecy, did you Riddle," memory-Harry hissed mockingly. "*And the dark lord shall mark him as his equal,*" memory-Harry recited, seemingly lost in his memories. Memory-Voldemort used the opportunity to shoot a killing curse at Harry, confident that it would hit and end his life. memory-Harry simply dropped the sword of Gryffindor; which faded away, and raised his empty hand. An opaque bluish shield sprang up in front of him and the killing curse clanged loudly off of it and careened off into the ceiling and dislodged a large chunk of plaster. "*But he will have power the dark lord knows not.*" memory-Harry continued, lashing the whip forward to tightly bind Voldemort.

"Nothing can block the *Avada Kedavra*..." The Dark Lord said with wide eyes. The man before him was much stronger than he had ever thought possible. To deflect the killing curse; wandlessly even, would take immense power, and memory-Harry had done it almost effortlessly. If Harry had the ability to do that wandlessly, what else could he do? He would no doubt be unpredictable in a duel. Binding spells and locking charms would be worthless in a fight against him if he could lift the spells without a wand. Dumbledore and himself were only able to use small amounts of magic without a wand, but the Potter could clearly use it for combat. Memory-Voldemort focused all his power on dispelling the black fire whip that was slowly crushing his black soul.

"Of course, nothing is normal for *me*, Riddle," memory-Harry said sarcastically, not bothered that memory-Voldemort had dispelled the black fire whip, as the effort had left the dark wizard on his hands and knees and gasping for breath. "Thanks to YOU!"

"What... what kind of spell was that?" Memory-Voldemort said stuttering for the first time in decades. Nothing he had encountered in his long life had been anything like that whip.

"Why should I tell you?" replied memory-Harry. "You won't need to know where you're dead." memory-Harry smiled vindictively when he felt a surge of magic from Voldemort, and knew he was trying to dispel the anti-apparition and portkey jinxes on the area; Lord Voldemort was trying to run away. "Oh, don't bother Riddle. You

won't be able to dispel those jinxes. Hermione made them herself before she died." Memory-Harry sneered nastily at the prone figure of the Dark Lord. "How does it feel to know a mudblood helped in the cause of your downfall? You won't be leaving this battle field alive."

Memory-Voldemort's glare intensified at the messy haired youth, but memory-Harry seemed unbothered by it. Instead, memory-Harry exuded an aura of confidence as he glowered right back at Voldemort's prone form. "Goodbye, Riddle," memory-Harry hissed softly. In a single movement, memory-Harry lunged forward and summoned the sword of Gryffindor to his hand and swung it in a wide arc. Voldemort raised his wand weakly to defend himself but only succeeded in getting his hand slashed off at the wrist. Voldemort let out a horrifying scream and memory-Harry reversed his swing, cutting the Dark Lord's other arm completely off.

"Even if I fall today Potter, I will still live!" Voldemort shouted, hysteria lacing his voice. "I have already obtained immortality."

Memory-Harry surprised everyone watching the duel and laughed loudly. "Do you mean the Horcruxes?" He asked. "Do you really think I'd be stupid enough to attack you without making sure I would be able to kill you? I'm surprised you didn't realize what I had done when I killed Nagini before coming after you," he said with a chuckle at the helpless Dark Lord's expense. Voldemort ceased his struggling and for the first time in his life, stared at someone with absolute fear. "Oh yes, you know what I am talking about don't you?" memory-Harry continued with a very Malfoy-esque drawl. "Yes, I have destroyed all of your Horcruxes. The Gaunt family ring, your diary, the cup of Helga Hufflepuff, the crown of Rowena Ravenclaw, the crest of Gryffindor, the necklace of Salazar Slytherin, and of course, your pet Nagini."

Voldemort was struck dumb at this revelation, knowing his death was truly at hand. He simply sat there, defeated and weak, as memory-Harry lunged forward again; his sword flashing in the dim light. A moment later, Voldemort's head slid off his neck and a fountain of black blood sprayed from the stump, soaking Harry's battle robes with dark, inhuman ichor.

And then, the pensieve memory ended and the two of them were lifted from the bowl. Rose was left staring at a haunted looking Harry sitting next to her.

“Now, I know you have questions, and you deserve the answers...truthful answers, so I have one more thing to tell you before I start explaining myself.” He said. Harry reached into his pocket and pulled out a small vial of clear liquid. “Do you know what this is?” He asked.

Rose shook her head negative and Harry began to grumble under his breath about Rose’s education. If all this ended favorably, he would make sure she did better in school than he did. “This is Veritaserum; the strongest truth serum in existence,” he explained. “Three drops of this and you would be forced to reveal all of your secrets to whoever asks for two hours, or until the antidote,” Harry held up another vial of slightly milky liquid, “is given. This potion is restricted from use outside of the Ministry and anyone who is caught using it without proper authorization will be put in Azkaban, without a trial, for life.”

Rose had a good idea at what Harry had been planning to do, and gulped nervously. She knew first hand from her godfather, Sirius, what Azkaban was like, and wouldn’t wish that on anyone...well, except maybe Voldemort and Wormtail. Her eyes were locked on the seemingly harmless looking liquid in the vial that Harry was holding and she barely made out his next words.

“If at any time during my explanation, you want me to take some of this, just say so.” He reassured her. Rose nodded hesitantly and looked into Harry’s eyes expectantly.

“I trust you, Harry.” Rose said simply.

“Rose, I’m sorry,” started Harry. “I really didn’t mean to lie to you. I just wanted to protect you, but I didn’t know just how...vulnerable and lost you were feeling. After seeing how you were close to losing it, I decided I should reveal to you who I really am and save you the trouble of having to wonder what in the world is going on around you. I want you to know that regardless of how things go here, I will always be there for you, okay?” He waited for Rose to acknowledge him before continuing.

Looking away for a moment, Harry took a second to organize his thoughts. "Now, as I'm sure you've already figured out, I am not your cousin. I'm not even sure what you would call me, but I am a Potter," said Harry. "I guess the best explanation I can come up with is, I *am* you if you had been born a boy."

Rose blinked pensively and waited for Harry to continue.

"What I want to tell you tonight is who I really am, where I'm from, and exactly how your name was put into the Goblet of Fire." Harry somehow knew what her next question would be and answered before she had a chance to speak. "And yes, it has everything to do with the dream you had over the summer." Rose seemed placated at this, but Harry still noticed that she was shaking slightly; whether with anticipation or with fear, he wasn't sure, but he was happy that she was calm none the less.

"Who are you, really?" Rose blurted before Harry had a chance to continue.

"My name is Harry James Potter, the son of James and Lily Evans Potter, and I am, in reality, twenty two years old. I am from an alternate dimension where you were born a boy and I am that boy. In my dimension everything that happened to you, happened to me. What you just saw was my final battle with Voldemort. Two years after that fight, after traveling around the Europe, I was somehow sent to this alternate reality, and de-aged four years..." replied Harry. "I have yet to figure out how or why I was sent here but when I do find out, I will tell you if you want to know."

Harry paused to give Rose the opportunity to ask some questions and she did not disappoint. She had so many questions to ask Harry that she didn't know where to begin, so she started with the logical one. "So, if you're older than me, but you are me, does that mean that you know the future?" Harry nodded slowly and thoughtfully. "So...that means that Voldemort is going to come back?"

"He's planning on using your blood in a potion to create another body for himself." Harry said. Seeing the confusion on Rose's face, he elaborated. "The tournament is all an elaborate plan to lure you to a graveyard in Little Hangleton where Voldemort will capture you and

steal some of your blood. Your name was put in the Goblet of Fire by a death eater impersonating Alastor Moody so that they could guide you to the cup. Remember, I told you that it was made into a port key? It took me and Cedric to the graveyard?"

Rose nodded, stunned at this revelation. "Wait...Professor Moody is a death eater?" Harry nodded and Rose sat back heavily on the sofa with a thoughtful look on her face. A few minutes went by and Rose's expression became crestfallen. Harry knew what she was thinking; that from here on out there was nothing but sorrow. Harry hurried to reassure her.

"Rose," He said gently, and he lifted her chin so that she was looking in his eyes. "I'm not going to let any of this happen to you. I care about you far too much already to let you go through any of that."

Tears began to roll down the girls cheeks and she pulled away from Harry's hands. All this information was almost more than she could handle right now. After everything that had happened to her in the few months that she had been back at Hogwarts, perhaps the revelation that her new found cousin wasn't really her cousin was the hardest to take in. She stared imploringly into Harry's eyes and began to sob in earnest. "If you care about me so much," She said accusingly. "Then why did you lie to me?"

Harry sighed and stared at his lap. "If you were in my position," He asked, shaking his head slightly. "What would you do?"

Rose thought for a second and then answered meekly, calming down a bit. "Probably the same thing that you did," she said.

"Then you understand that I didn't want to cause you undue stress or hurt your feelings. I just wanted to protect you."

Rose's sobs redouble, and Harry fought the urge to wrap her in a warm comforting hug. Now was not the time, and he wasn't even sure if she wanted one. Instead, Harry did the only thing he could do and soldiered on. "When I arrived here, in this dimension, my only thought was to find out how and why and a way to get back to where I came from," he said. Rose looked imploringly up at Harry, silently willing him to make things make sense again. "But then, I heard someone

crying in the woods, and I met you. Then I got to know you, and I knew that I couldn't leave you alone." Harry was a bit surprised when Rose threw herself into his arms and hugged him tightly around the middle. He wrapped his arms around her slight shoulders and held her until her sobs subsided.

"Sorry," she said bashfully once she stopped crying. Harry shrugged, an equally shy look on his face.

"S ok..." he muttered. He noticed Rose wiping her eyes and he wandlessly conjured a clean hanky for her to dry them with.

"Who?" Rose suddenly asked.

Harry blinked bemusedly, unsure of what she meant. "Excuse me?"

Rose hesitated for a second before explaining. "You never mentioned what happened to any of our...my...er...your friends. Merlin this is confusing..." she paused for a second then shook her head before continuing. "What happened to them?"

Harry stared into Rose's eyes; eyes so much like his own, for a few minutes before coming to a decision. He knew that Rose wanted to know; she wouldn't have asked otherwise, but he asked anyway. Rose nodded quickly and Harry explained. He decided to start with the most important people to him. "Sirius was murdered at the end of my fifth year during a battle at the ministry. Dumbledore was murdered at the end of my sixth, and in the middle of my seventh year both Remus and his new wife were killed while on their honeymoon."

Rose's face drained of all color and she looked like a child that had just been told that Christmas had been cancelled forever.

"Sirius and Remus, die?" She squeaked pitifully. "What- what about Ron, Hermione and Ginny?" She continued, her chin quivering with emotion.

Harry sighed softly and told her.

“About six months after Dumbledore was killed, all the Weasleys except Percy and Ron went into hiding somewhere in America. Ron stayed behind to help Hermione and I find a way to kill Voldemort, but he didn’t stay with us for very long. Turned out that he only stayed behind because he thought he loved Hermione. She didn’t return his feelings and it broke him. He killed Hermione that night out of jealousy; simply because she told him that she loved me instead, and he ran off to join Voldemort.” Harry’s eyes reflected the pain the memories evoked in him.

Rose thought about that for a moment. She could definitely see that happening with Ron, and she was glad that she was a girl and didn’t have to deal with Hermione having a crush on her...she hoped. “What about Ginny?” She asked. “I find it hard to believe that she would just let you take Ron and Hermione and not her,” She said. One difference between herself and Harry was that she was better friends with Ginny than with Hermione. She was sure that she knew Ginny better than Harry.

“Well, you’re right about that,” Harry conceded. “She wasn’t happy, especially when I broke up with her.”

“Waitaminue,” Rose said in a rush. “You mean to tell me that you and Ginny were...” She poked the tips of her index fingers together a few times. “Together?”

To his credit, Harry flushed in embarrassment and scratched the back of his head sheepishly. “Yeah, well...” he trailed off. Rose simply smiled knowingly at Harry, and he pointedly ignored her triumphant look.

“I’ll bet that Ginny was really peeved with you after that.” Rose chimed.

Harry laughed bitterly at the bad memories. “Actually, she wasn’t nearly as angry as you’d think,” he said a bit sadly. “She told me that she understood, and I promised that, once Voldemort was out of the way, we could be together again...” Harry stared morosely at his shoes, unable to go on.

Rose didn't have to hear Harry say he was madly in love with Ginny; she could tell that he was just by looking at his face. As to separating himself from her... she understood that as well. She'd do the same thing if she were in his position. "You must miss her a lot." She said, laying a comforting hand on Harry's shoulder. Harry shook his head slightly.

"Several months after Ron was found to be a death eater, I managed to hunt him down with several other Death Eaters, including some of his inner circle while they were on a raid. I was forced to kill Ron in a duel. Luckily, he hadn't told Voldemort that we knew how he had achieved immortality. Why he didn't- I don't know, but Ginny... when I told her I had killed Ron in a death eater raid, she said some pretty awful stuff about how everything was my fault, my parent's death, Sirius, Hermione. I couldn't stay with her after that." Harry said quietly, not really wanting to talk about Ginny anymore. It was still a sore subject for him. "After Ron died, the rest of the Weasleys went disappeared from the wizarding world."

Rose stared disbelievingly at Harry, unwilling to accept that Ginny would say something so nasty to him; or herself by extension.

"Now," Harry said clearing the lump his throat and pushing all his depression aside. "As to why you're in the Tri-Wizard Tournament, like I said before, Voldemort will need you to be present so that he can resurrect himself. I have a plan to..."

"Hold on a second," Rose cut him off, a bit put out that Harry just went straight back to Voldemort's plans. "So you and Ginny didn't get back together? I suppose with her being in America and all..."

"No," Harry said immediately, looking like he really didn't want to talk about it. "She tried desperately to make up with me after I killed Voldemort, but...what she said just really hurt, you know? I had nightmares for months because of her. It was so bad that I almost died a couple of times to dementors."

Rose sighed, silently relieved that Harry was single. She wasn't exactly sure as to *why* she was relieved, but she was none the less. "Harry, when you said all the Weasleys went into hiding, you said 'with the exception of Percy and Ron. What about Percy?'"

“Percy,” growled out Harry. “He became a traitor to the Light side. In the summer between my fourth and fifth years, he had a falling out with the Weasleys. Turned out that he joined Voldemort. A few years later, he reconciled with his family, but it was just a cover. He was really spying for Voldemort...”

Rose simply gaped, but the shock was lessened since Harry had already explained that Ron had become a death eater as well. “I-I honestly can see Ron becoming dark but...Percy? The rule-monger?” she asked skeptically.

Harry let out a short, bitter laugh. “Percy wanted power and money. He insulted his father in their own home and frowned upon everything his family believed in. He didn’t trust me or Dumbledore when we said that Voldemort was alive. He said Dumbledore was senile and I was an attention-seeking brat. To be honest, Ron’s defection shocked me more than Percy’s.”

Rose could see where that made sense. Her thoughts turned toward her godfather and former professor. She was morbidly curious as to how they died. “How did...” She began, pausing and worrying her lip uncertainly. She knew that if she were in Harry’s position, she wouldn’t want to answer her next question, but she really wanted to know. “How did Sirius and Remus die?” She paused again as part of Harry’s tale finally registered with her. “No, no, no...How exactly did *Dumbledore* die? I mean, he’s...*Dumbledore*. The only wizard Voldemort ever feared.”

Once again, Harry laughed bitterly. After the fiasco in the Department of Mysteries, Harry’s faith in the headmaster had been shattered irrevocably.

“Dumbledore? You make it sound like Dumbledore is invincible. He’s far from it; as human as you or me. You can say he was partly the reason why Sirius died in my fifth year. Dumbledore thought it was best that I be treated like a child and hide secrets until I become an adult. I don’t really want to talk about it, so lets just say that the reason I hate Snape so much and don’t trust Dumbledore came from my disaster of a fifth year.” Harry said looking a bit lost. “Sirius was killed fighting his cousin, Bellatrix Lestrange,” Harry growled the

name with such vehemence and hatred that Rose flinched. "...Trying to save me from my own stupidity."

Rose glowered at the floor in front of her. 'Bellatrix Lestrange,' she spat mentally, filing the name away in her 'people who should suffer horribly' file in her mind.

"Anyway, as for Remus, he died the day he got married to a person named Nymphadora Tonks, who is by the way, Sirius niece. She should be an Auror right now. You would have loved her. She's a great person. You're *supposed* to meet her next year, but now that I've changed things I don't know if you will. Either way, you should. I think you'd get along wonderfully. Sorry, I'm getting off track here. Anyhow, both Remus and Tonks were attacked on their wedding night as they were leaving on their honeymoon. For some reason, Voldemort ordered a hit on them...most likely to antagonize me."

Harry went quiet for a short moment and stared at the ground morosely. He could still feel the pain of not being there to save them, while he and his friends were looking for the horcruxes. The only reason he knew of what had happened to Remus and Tonks was because from what he could glean from the Daily Prophet and various order members.

"They fought like heroes... managed to kill nine death eaters before they were forced to detonate a magical bomb in their desperation. They died in the blast, but took every one of the bastards with them."

Rose let out a pained sob; partly at the destroyed expression on Harry's face and partly at the knowledge that the two people she loved most would die in the future. Unsure of what to do, she scooted closer to Harry and wrapped her arms around him in a comforting hug; for Harry and for herself.

"I'm sorry Rose, but that was how things went in my dimension," Harry said softly, returning the hug gratefully. "But I've already said that I'm not going to let that happen here. As for Dumbledore," Harry spat the name like it was a curse word, "Would you believe me if I told you that Dumbledore killed himself?" Harry felt Rose pull away from him with a horrified expression on her pale face. "No, he didn't

commit suicide. He let those he trusted beyond anything else be the death of him. Snape murdered him in front of me.”

Rose gasped and held Harry tighter, tears streaming down her face again. “I knew it...” Rose said through her tears. “I knew he was a good for nothing bastard. He killed Dumbledore!”

“Yeah, we knew he was an evil git from the start, didn’t we?” Harry said calmly, rubbing comforting circles on Rose’s back. “Dumbledore just wouldn’t believe me. Snape earned Dumbledore’s trust after he defected from Voldemort and gave Dumbledore a vital piece of information during the first war.”

“What is that?” Rose said wiping the tears away and reluctantly pulling from Harry’s arms. She felt so safe when she was there.

“It was the reason that Voldemort went after your...*our* parents,” Harry hissed icily. Rose recoiled at the hatred in Harry’s voice. “Snape overheard Professor Trelawney give a prophecy to Dumbledore predicting that a child would be born that would have the power to kill Voldemort. He immediately ran to Voldemort and told him what he had heard... But then he felt bad when he realized that Voldemort was going after our parents and went to Dumbledore to tell him what was going on.”

However, Rose didn’t hear the last statement; she was stuck on ‘*was the reason that Voldemort went after your...our parents*’. The phrase kept playing over and over in her head and her temper exploded. Harry was taken by surprise at how fast Rose’s mood changed.

“*Snape* is the reason that Voldemort went after my parents!?” Rose yelled angrily, her green eyes almost glowing in the dim light of the room.

Harry was immensely happy about the wards and charms he had placed around the shrieking shack earlier in the evening: silencing wards, notice-me-not charms, and several others. He was pretty sure that if he had not put up those silencing wards, everyone in Hogsmeade would believe that the shack was now haunted by a banshee.

“Now you see why I hate Snape. If you’d like, later on, I’ll show you my memory of when Dumbledore told me of the prophecy. Just promise me that you will not go after Snape. I have plans for him later.” Harry said as he was tried to calm down the furiously muttering red head.

“Not only does he take it out on me, but he is the reason why I have no parents! That bastard! I’ll fucking kill him! I’ll have his head on a goddamned pike!”

“Actually Rose, the prophecy is the reason that Voldemort went after our parents.” Harry said, shocking Rose from her muttering. He waited a moment to make sure that he had her complete attention before pulling a silvery strand from his temple and putting it in the pensieve. He stirred it, the tapped the rim twice with his wand, and an image of Trelawney rose from the bowl and began to revolve slowly. Her voice sounded eerie and hollow as she began to recite the prophecy. *“The one with the power to vanquish the dark lord approaches. Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies. And the dark lord shall mark them,”* ‘Them,’ Harry thought. ‘Must have changed with the dimension, but why would it change my memory...?’ *“As his equal, but they will have power the dark lord knows not. And either shall die at the hands of the other, for neither can live while the other survives...”*

The image sank back into the bowl and Rose paled dramatically. “I’m pretty sure that it applies to you too, Rose. I could have been Neville Longbottom, seeing as he was born the thirtieth of July...as the seventh month dies.” Harry said softly. He knew Rose’s next question and headed her off before she could ask it. “Your scar, Rose. He marked you.”

Rose’s finger traced the contour of her scar and she whimpered pitifully. Harry wrapped an arm around her slender shoulders and gave her a reassuring smile. “You have me, too.” He said. Rose smiled shakily up at him.

“Now, do you have any more questions?”

“Yes,” Rose said right away. “Is Draco a death eater?”

"Oh yeah," Harry said emotionlessly. "I tortured and killed him myself." At Rose's expression of revulsion, Harry hastened to explain himself. "He and a group of death eaters had attacked an orphanage. I found Malfoy raping and torturing a helpless muggle girl. I...kinda lost my temper."

Rose's eyes dulled. She would have done the exact same thing, had she come across Malfoy raping someone, probably extending the torture as long as possible. She decided to move on to another subject. "You mentioned horcruxes. What are they?"

"They're the reason Voldemort is immortal," Harry said softly. "He tore his soul into pieces with a ritual and stored them inside various objects. All of them must be destroyed so that Voldemort can be killed. I don't want you to worry about them, though. I already have a plan to destroy them. From what I've checked the past week, all of the horcruxes are located the same places in this dimension as they were in mine, except for one: the Ring of Slytherin, which might be in Dumbledore's possession." Harry said Dumbledore's name with distaste.

"Do you really hate Dumbledore that much?" Rose asked. She could see why Harry didn't trust the ancient man, but she didn't understand where his vehemence came from. When Harry told her Dumbledore had hired the same man that was the reason why she had no parents, all her respect for him was gone. The fact that Dumbledore used legillimency on his students didn't help matters either, but Dumbledore did things with the best of intentions...didn't he?

"I do." Harry said simply. "Because everything bad in my life has come either directly or indirectly from him. I still haven't made peace with him and I doubt I will make peace with him anytime soon. The only reason I didn't kill Snape when it was revealed to me that he was responsible for our parents' death, was because the Order still needed him and Dumbledore had tricked me by twisting his words so that they told me nothing while placating me. I still say it was his fault for not leaving me to be raised by another family instead of those blasted Dursleys."

Rose couldn't help but agree with him.

“Harry, you don’t have to answer this, but how did you get so strong? I mean, Voldemort has over fifty years of knowledge and even though you may have already graduated Hogwarts, you were only twenty years old when you defeated him, right?”

“Remember the part of the prophecy that says, ‘powers the dark lord knows not’?”

Rose nodded.

“Well,” Harry began. “There’s a room in the Department of Mysteries that contains a power behind its locked door. When I entered that room I gained the ‘power the dark lord knows not’.” Taking a deep breath, Harry went on. “Once *you* enter that room your magical core will be...supercharged. I gained an enormous magical reserve and the ability to cast spells wandlessly. I’m not sure what you’ll get.”

“Wow, you mean, anyone who...”

“No,” Harry interrupted her. “I can’t explain it, but in my world, only I can enter this room. If the Prophecy is right, you may be able to enter it as well. The only thing I can tell you is, if you are too young or deemed unworthy of entering the room, you will die an extremely painful death. The process in the chamber is bad enough...I don’t want to think about what would happen if you aren’t supposed to be in there.”

Rose gulped. “Can we talk about this later, it sounds scary.”

Harry didn’t blame her. If only she knew how horrible it really was. That Chamber inside the Department of Mysteries was the key to Rose fulfilling her destiny, but at the same time, it could be the death of her.

He had entered that Chamber at the age of nineteen. He knew if he had tried entering it if he was any younger, he would have been found unworthy and died inside of the room.

“Now, on to business...” Harry quickly told her all about how his fourth year went, about the Dark Mark at the Quidditch World cup, Crouch Junior, the Tri-Wizard Tournament and what Voldemort’s

plans were about. There was a moment of silence as Harry finished his explaining things to her before Rose spoke up again, a pensive look on her face.

“Harry,” Rose said quietly. “If you are my alternate male self, what should I call you? It feels really strange calling you my cousin now. Honestly, it would feel strange calling you my brother.”

Harry shrugged and shook his head, just as dumbfounded as she was.

Seeing that Harry was just as flummoxed unsure as her, she quickly changed the subject.

“Just so you know, I *am* angry with you for lying to me, but I’m happy of course that you were willing to tell me the honest truth. It sure saves me the headache of what’s going on. It’s good to know why my name was placed in the Tri-Wizard Tournament and that I will eventually make up with my friends.” Rose said unsure about the feeling that had her hoping that she would not reconcile with her friends. She didn’t want Ron turning traitor because of jealousy and Hermione dying, because she was friends with her. It was for the best that she stayed away from the both of them, so she could keep them from harms way.

Harry smiled in relief. He had been a bit worried as to how Rose would take this information. He was surprised at how mature she was, compared to him in *his* fourth year.

‘I guess it is true, girls really do mature faster then us guys,’ thought Harry. ‘They’re just more emotional compared to us.’

It didn’t take long as Rose got more comfortable with Harry as both began talking a bit more about Harry’s dimension, not to mention, skim through some of his more pleasant memories in the pensieve. After seeing Bill’s wedding the pensieve, she hinted to Harry at how she wouldn’t mind having a pensieve of her own.

Harry wasn’t as clueless as most men his age. He took the hint and told her after they finished viewing all of his memories of his world that she could have the pensieve as an ‘apology’ gift.

While the two were talking, Harry couldn't believe how angry Rose seemed at the mention of Snape and Dumbledore. As much as Dumbledore had said he only considered what was best for Harry; and by extension, Rose, those words didn't placate Rose. She was a red head and a Potter, and from what he had seen, she could be really hot headed when she wanted to be. Rose seemed to be surprised and shocked at some of things that were different in Harry's dimension, compared to hers. One thing she was most impressed with was Harry's skills with a sword.

"The sword of Godric Gryffindor," The red head said thoughtfully. "Harry, I'm not sure if you might have already considered it, but do you think we might be his heirs?" Harry nodded absentmindedly and Rose noticed his thoughtful expression as well. "Harry, what's up?" asked Rose.

"I did have my suspicions that I was the possibly heir of Gryffindor after my second year. I mean, nothing is ever normal around us, so there was of course a possible chance of being Godric Gryffindor's last heir."

"You know something..." said Rose.

"Rose, did you know that you could be emancipated whenever you want? On my 17th birthday, Gringotts approach me and told me about how Dumbledore had held me back from reading my parents will and kept me dark about my family vault until he considered it to be a good time to show us. Once he died I was able to read it without him stopping me or interfering." Clenching his hands, Harry spoke in an angry voice. "I learned in our parents will that Dumbledore was specifically ordered not to send us to the Dursleys should both our parents and Sirius be deceased or unable to take care of us. Should Sirius be unable to take care of us, we were to be sent to either the Moon family, James' mother's side of the family or any light family that would be capable of taking care of us so long as long as the Dursleys were out of the picture."

If Harry thought he saw Rose was really angry a while ago, she was nothing to how angry she looked down. She was positively radiating

magic and Harry knew he was going to have to calm her down before she brought the entire shrieking shack down on them.

Casting a powerful wandless and wordless calming spell, Harry put an arm around Rose who started to cry again. 'Girls,' he thought exasperatedly.

"That... that old bastard, he knew of my parents will and hid it from me! He knew he wasn't supposed to send me to the Dursleys, but he still did. It makes me wonder if that bastard is trying to manipulate me all this time!"

Harry nodded grimly as he tried to comfort the girl in his arms. When he had found out about what Dumbledore had done to him, it took the combined might of the Order of the Phoenix who was present for Dumbledore's will and several of the most powerful Goblins in Gringotts to calm him down. He was pretty sure he heard Remus say that if Harry had lost control... he would have leveled Gringotts bank.

That was the day that everyone had questioned his or her loyalty to Dumbledore. Withholding a persons will was considered an act of treason in the wizarding world; especially a well-known family like the Potters. It was even more frowned upon than casting the unforgivable curses.

"Anyway, after I read our parents will, I learned of Sirius will as well. It turned out that Sirius had wanted me to be emancipated as well, but Dumbledore had prevented me from going to his will reading. Instead, he thought it would be more considerate of him if he told me the news himself. However, all he told me was that Sirius left everything to me. He didn't mention anything about how Sirius gave me permission to be emancipated."

Rose could only growl in response. Though Harry hadn't showed her any memories of this, she knew what he told her was the truth. Harry would no doubt show her the memories if she asked, but she was unsure if she could hold her temper at this point. Hell, she was growing even more enraged at just the thought of Dumbledore.

"When I finished reading my parents will, I immediately set off to the Potter vault in which I discovered our family line. I learned there, that

our family line, which was one of the oldest pureblood lines, that the last descendants of Gryffindor and Ravenclaw had married into our family line, making us a descendant of the founders.”

“So, it’s true,” Rose, said momentarily forgetting her anger. “Godric Gryffindor and Rowena Ravenclaw really had a child together.”

Harry nodded.

“Yeah, in history books, it never did say *who* and *how* they had a child with or when, but many people find it odd that the Ravenclaw line had disappeared along with the Gryffindor line. The only lines that proudly display who they were are Slytherin and Hufflepuff.”

“So what happened when you learned of our family line?” Rose said hopefully to know more about her... no, their family.

“Nothing much, but I did learn more about the Sword of Gryffindor. Only those heirs who show true loyalty to Hogwarts can wield his sword. Also, the sword is actually a shape-shifting weapon that will change itself to any blade most suited to the person wielding it. Very creative, I admit.” Harry said thinking hard. He had his sword stored in his trunk. Did that mean that there were now two in this dimension? It was something he had to look in to.

“Wow, I have to get the sword back from Dumbledore!” Rose said excitedly, but then she frowned. “But I probably won’t even know how to use it.”

“I can teach you. It’ll help you very much as Voldemort doesn’t know how to use a sword. He puts Muggles weapons beneath him.”

“Really?” Rose asked, her eyes shining with hope and excitement. “You’ll teach me how to use weapons?”

“Of course, if you really forgive me for lying to you. I’ll train you to be the strongest witch in your year, possibly, in your generation, whether it is weapons or magic.” Harry said hopefully.

Rose simply laughed. “Harry, of course I forgive you, you prat. I was never really mad at you in the first place,” she said, happy that Harry

had considered about her happiness and her forgiveness as his top priority. She knew she could trust him. "And thank you, I would love for you to train me!" She said jumping on him for a hug.

Harry was inwardly amazed at the maturity that Rose showed. He had considered that Rose might have hexed him for lying to her, but she was simply so nice and kind!

A bit too trusting if he had to admit...

Just like he was back in his fourth year...

Chapter 5

After Harry had finished detailing Rose's training regimen, he moved on to his plans concerning her involvement in the Tri-Wizard Tournament. Rose was very hesitant when Harry told her she had to go through with the Tournament since she was in a magically binding contract. Rose became even more hesitant and was close to protesting when Harry told her that she had to win the tournament and be there when Voldemort arrived in the grave yard to use her for the ceremony. It was honestly the easiest way Harry could find to kill the Dark Lord.

Obviously, Harry couldn't kill Voldemort in his spirit form. Perhaps bind him, but Voldemort was a smart man. He would figure a way to unbind himself and they would have to kill him again. He was temporarily immortal until all of the Horcruxes were destroyed and Harry was unsure as to what would happen if Harry destroyed them all while Voldemort was in spirit form. There was a possible chance that he would forever remain an evil spirit or possibly, be forever immortal.

"So, the plan is: I'm to win the tournament at all costs and make sure I touch the port-key before any of the other Champions?" Rose asked in a hesitant voice.

"Yes, you will have to try your best to reach the port-key as quickly as possible. If everything goes according to plan, you will be port-keyed to Voldemort and the rat."

"But," Rose said looking uncomfortable. She had a bad feeling that it wouldn't really go to plan. "What if they try to...?" She trailed off, hesitant to say what was on her mind. "What if they try to...use me first?"

Harry shook his head, knowing exactly what Rose meant. He was mildly curious as to why Rose distrusted men so, but that was a question for later. "They won't." At Rose's skeptical look, he explained. "They need to blood of someone who is both an enemy and a virgin. I was both at the age of fourteen," Harry said. He looked her suspiciously. "You are a virgin right?"

Rose blushed furiously and slapped him hard on the cheek.

“Harry!” She shrieked. “Of course I’m still a virgin! I’m too young to even consider sex!” Rose said her, cheeks bright red. ‘Well, maybe not that young.’ She thought about her dream about Harry that morning, though Harry did not need to know about that.

Harry couldn’t help but chuckle at the red head as he nursed his bruised cheek.

“Shut *up*, Harry!” Rose said trying to hide her flushed cheeks. She couldn’t believe she was talking to a boy about her virtue. It was so embarrassing, especially to the boy who she had grown fond of. That was one of the reasons why she forgave him so quickly and easily for lying to her.

“Anyway, I’ll be hiding nearby in the graveyard and, once the resurrection is completed, I will rush in and rescue you. When I appear, I’ll give you an illegal port-key that would attract the Ministry’s attention and...”

“Hold it!” interrupted Rose. Harry couldn’t help but groan. He had an awful feeling about what Rose was going to say. “I am not letting you fight alone.” There it is... “This is my fight too and if you haven’t forgotten, the prophecy stated that I must kill him. Not you. So how are you going to kill him without me?”

Harry shrugged. Inwardly, he was still shocked at how easily Rose was taking all of this, including the prophecy. Perhaps it was because she was being told a year earlier, and from someone she saw as family. “I was planning on capturing him so you could deliver the final blow. In the worst possible outcome, I’ll try my best to see if the prophecy is even the same once I break into the Headmaster’s office.”

Rose normally would have considered telling a teacher about someone trying to break into Dumbledore’s office, since she looked up to the Headmaster as a grandfather, but after hearing Harry’s story and seeing his cold, harsh memories, her trust and acceptance of the old man had been shattered. “No way, buster,” said Rose, standing up and looking down on Harry. Harry had to stifle his

laughter since she really wasn't that intimidating. "I am going to help you fight Voldemort, regardless of what you will say, end of story."

Harry couldn't help but laugh. "Rose, you saw my duel with Voldemort, you won't stand a chance."

"I'll help you take on his death eaters then!"

This time, Harry sighed in exasperation. Was he like that during his fourth year. He hoped not. "Rose, I have plans for the death eaters. I'm going to set some traps for them, so that the moment they appear, they'll be incapacitated."

"What kind of traps?" Rose asked curiously.

"There was this spell I learned in my old dimension which was hidden in Dumbledore's private library. It is a combination of charm work and rune magic, that is set around a specific radius area that freezes any person who apparates inside of the circle field the moment they appear in it. I used the spell numerous of times in my old dimension when we were ambushing Death Eaters. It's a pretty useful spell which gives me time to appear inside, save you from harm, capture Wormtail for Sirius freedom, and kill Voldemort alone without any interference." Harry explained not bothering to tell her the trap would only give him a few minutes of freedom, but it was enough time for him to take out the majority of the threat.

"But..." Rose said wanting to help.

"No buts," said Harry. "This isn't a game Rose. I don't want to make the same mistake with you that I made with Sirius. Would you risk me getting killed because you were in the way?" He said, hating to use the guilt trip.

"No," replied Rose as she knew what he was trying to say. She saw Harry's memories and knew Harry hated to see friends and comrades die because of him. "But...could I still watch the fight from afar?" She asked. She still had an uncomfortable feeling that something would go wrong in the end.

Knowing Rose as well as he knew himself, he knew that she wouldn't give up till she got her way. "Fine," he said, relenting. "I will port-key you to a safe distance from the fight where there will be a broomstick, your invisibility cloak and some potions waiting for you. Use the healing potions, get on the broomstick and watch the fight from a far under invisibility. Is that acceptable?"

Rose nodded cheerfully.

"Alright," Harry said throwing his hands in the air. "Now that we have established a goal and a plan, let's talk more about your training."

"Yeah! Training!" Rose said excitedly.

"Okay, first, we are going to get your body back in shape," Harry said looking at her appraisingly. Rose blushed again under the scrutiny. Harry knew Rose had a crush on him. He wasn't stupid. There had been many women in his old dimension that fancied him, and Harry had learned the hard way how to recognize the signs. The only real question was; did he feel the same for her? In the wizarding world, it was not unusual to see wizards marry their family as purebloods would do anything to keep their blood 'pure' and 'strong'. Add that to the fact that he didn't see Rose as much of a family member at all. She was something...more.

"I have the health potions already made. You're going to take them starting tonight; one every morning, one every afternoon, and one every evening before bed. Tomorrow morning, I want you to wake up at 4:00 A.M. and meet me back here in the shack. Don't give me that look," Harry said when he noticed Rose's frown at the early wake up time. "It's the best way for your body to stay in shape and to be fully alert. Should you oversleep, so help me god, I will march up that dormitory and drag you downstairs myself."

"But you can't go into the girl's dormitory." Rose protested weakly. "It's sealed so that..."

"Forgive me for interrupting, Rose," Harry teased. "But I can. You and I are descendants of the founders, which gives us the ability to open any door or walk any path should we use our place as rightful heirs"

Rose tried her adorable pout, which turned into a real one when she realized that it didn't work on Harry.

"Take this," Harry said giving her a small hand held box that he pulled from his enlarged trunk. "I enchanted it so it can only be opened by a parselmouth. To open it, just hiss open in parseltongue. Inside the box are all the potions you might need. Not just health potions, but I stocked it with variety of other potions as well. I spent a lot of time on those potions yesterday and today and it almost took me forever to make them. Strength potions, dreamless sleep potion, energy potions, and of course, potions from your monthly girl things." Harry said ignoring the bright blush on Rose's cheeks. "They're all protected by notice-me-not charms so that only you and I can see them, and they all have an unbreakable charm on the flasks. So you should be okay."

Rose simply nodded and tried to get her cheeks unflushed.

"The potions aren't as strong as they normally are because I cast a spell on them that addiction. So you should be safe if you want to take the dreamless sleep every night."

"I'll also be teaching you occlumency," Harry interjected in a serious voice. "Occlumency is very important Rose, especially to you. You have to learn it before we kill Voldemort because once he is dead, the scar will start to fade, but it hurts...a lot. It helps to master occlumency since the pain is mostly mental."

Rose sighed. If she really wanted to get strong, she had to start somewhere. "So how long will be the working out be?" asked Rose.

"Just thirty minutes to an hour. One of the potions I gave you is an enhanced muscle potion, something I personally designed. It lets the drinker get almost ten times the result from their physical workouts."

Rose couldn't help but stare. "Damn, you must be one hell of a Potion Master." She said, her voice laced with awe.

"You have no idea Rose flower," Harry said chuckling.

“Wait! Then why do we have to wake up so early if it’s only thirty minutes of physical training?” Rose said incredulously. She still felt warm and tingly at Harry calling her Rose flower.

Harry sighed. “Training, basically. I’d like you to be able to go on as little sleep as possible. Also, it’s for secrecy. Until I find a home here in Hogsmeade, we will be forced to train in a secret room called The Room of Requirement at Hogwarts. I’ll show it to you tomorrow. The earlier we train, the less likely we will be discovered. Understand?” Rose nodded reluctantly. “And I’ll let you lie in on the weekends...I’m not a taskmaster.” He added with a laugh.

“Boy, you’re smart, I wouldn’t have thought of that.” She said embarrassingly.

“I’m not smart Rose,” Harry said shaking his head. “It’s survival instincts. If I’m right, you must really be as bad at strategy and chess as I am.”

She chuckled at how right he was. She was utter rubbish at chess. She didn’t know why she even bothered to continue to play Chess with Ron and Ginny, since she would always lose anyway.

“So what am I’m going to do for the rest of the time after training?” asked Rose.

“I got it all planned out, here is your schedule,” Harry said in his teacher voice as he handed her a slip of parchment.

Taking the piece of parchment, Rose couldn’t help but groan.

Daily Morning schedule...

4:00-4:45 Physical Training

4:45-5:00 Rest

5:00-5:30 Occulmency Training

5:30-6:00 Rest & Breakfast

6:00-7:00 Study

7:00-8:00 Rest or possibly option to eat Breakfast again

Daily Night Training...

9:00 Occlumency Training and Sword Training

“Let me warn you, you will most likely start eating a lot nowadays, to restore all your energy you burn as your metabolism increases,” Harry said shaking Rose out of her daze at her upcoming hard and difficult month. “Oh, I can’t believe I almost forgot. While you are in class, try your best to not say the incantation of the spell out loud and try to practice on your Occlumency whenever you have time.”

“Harry,” Rose said, understanding the need for wordless and occlumency daily practice in classes. “It says here, on my daily night training, that I will be training occlumency again and sword training. It doesn’t say how long the training will be.”

“It depends. We will be using a time-turner so that you can have more sleep if you need it,” Harry said surprising the red head.

“Where the hell did you get a time-turner?” Rose blurted.

Not bothered that she just cursed, Harry said in a bored voice, “Knockturn Alley. If you know where to go, you can find anything you want there, for a price that is.”

“Oh,” Rose said in a surprised voice.

“When will I begin my animagus training?” asked Rose.

“Probably by the beginning of December, before the Yule Ball,” said Harry.

“Yule Ball?” she asked.

Harry slapped his forehead exasperatedly for giving away more than he wanted to. “Sorry, you will be having a school dance late

December, as the Champions traditionally hold a Ball. You have to attend to the Ball with a dance partner, as a Champion.”

“Oh no, I don’t know how to dance!” Rose panicked.

“Don’t worry, I’ll teach you. I took the time to learn how to dance when I was invited to a Ministry ball, in celebration of the defeat of Voldemort.”

Rose nodded gratefully.

“Now then, is there anything else you want to ask?” Harry said as he realized the time.

“Yes, is it possible, that on my schedule here when it says 7:00 - 8:00 Rest or possibly option to eat breakfast again, can I use the time-turner to get more sleep?”

“That ruins the whole point of trying to build up a resistance to deep sleeping and awareness Rose,” Harry said as patiently as possible.

“I know,” Rose said looking so miserable, it broke Harry’s heart. “I just want more sleep.”

Groaning at how Rose could easily manipulate him if she gave him that look every time, he spoke to her in a serious voice. “Rose, this is only for a month. I guess it’ll be a waste of time for you to wake up so early after that, seeing as we’re not really at war.”

Rose cheered at this.

“Great, I don’t fancy waking up so early actually.”

Harry nodded in understanding as he was digging around in the pockets of his robes.

“Here,” Harry said, pulling out a Time-Turner. “You know how to use this right?”

“Yes,” Rose said in a serious voice. “Hermione had one and I had always wanted a Time-Turner.”

“Okay, I won’t lecture you on how to use it then, but here’s a warning. Don’t get caught with it and make sure no one finds you with it. I put a charm on it that prevents the fake from seeing it.”

And with that, Harry and Rose hugged each other, and Harry escorted her back to the castle.

Chapter 6

Rose groaned miserably as she staggered down to the great hall for breakfast. It had been two weeks since her training started and she had been introduced to her training facility known as The Room of Requirement. Her first impression of the room was one of awe; what with its ability to change to whatever it needed to be, but that soon turned to disgust once her training regimen started. Despite what he had said during their meeting in the shrieking shack, Harry really was a slave driver. He pushed her harder than she ever thought she could go. She guessed that when Harry told her that she could have a lie in on the weekends, he meant Sundays, seeing how today was Saturday and he still got her up.

“Only two more weeks,” She said exhaustedly as she stuffed her invisibility cloak in her bag. Tomorrow she was to meet Sirius in the common room and in just three days, she would compete in the first task. Luckily for her, today was a Hogsmeade weekend, which gave her the opportunity to visit Harry, rather than the other way around. It had been quite lonely these past few weeks for her, except for the mornings and evenings when she trained with Harry. “That slave driver,” she muttered good-naturedly. “Why does he have to push me so hard when it comes to occlumency?” She paused as she passed a mirror in the hallway and stopped to glance at herself.

In only two weeks, she had started looking like the person she had always desired to look like: Her mum at age fourteen.

“Damn, I’m starting to look good,” she remarked happily as she straightened out her robes.

Her mind boggled when she realized that, if she looked like she did now after only two weeks, she would look even better once everything was done. Nobody had really noticed her sudden growth spurt though, mainly due to the fact that her robes concealed her figure rather well. She remembered Harry telling her that Hogwarts’ school outfit didn’t do much for the figure and now she knew why. The only reason she was finishing the last two weeks of physical

training was so that she would have stronger muscles, but with a sexy lean build.

Or so Harry told her...

Besides her training, many things had happened had begun to happen to her at Hogwarts. Snape was glaring and stalking her even more than usual after their confrontation, but surprisingly, he left her and all of the Gryffindors alone. He was not as unfair as he had been when it came to taking points away or giving out punishments. Heck, he was even fair to her in potions class as he had given her full marks for her potion, which had almost caused her to faint from the shock.

Harry told her the reason why Snape was acting that way was because Dumbledore fell for his bluff and didn't want her to transfer to Beauxbatons. So he was most likely willing to put Snape in his place if he continued to be biased. Dumbledore would do anything to keep his 'weapon'. Plus, Snape would be fired immediately should Rose report him to the Board of Governors about how he had raised a wand at a student and if she mentioned he used Legimency on students.

As nice as Snape was to her now, it did not stop her from hating the bastard for leading her parents to their deaths...

Or Dumbledore for that matter...

She didn't doubt Harry one bit when he had told her that Snape was playing Dumbledore for a fool and was only pretending to be a spy so he could stay out of Azkaban. Not only did it make sense that Snape would lay off her when it came to confrontations, but Harry had a way in thinking exactly the way Dumbledore thought.

He was very wise for his age...

And very sexy whenever he worked out with her...

"Bloody hell, I can't believe I'm thinking about him like that," muttered Rose as she continued the walk down to the great hall. She blushed furiously thinking of Harry; whom she was still unsure whether to call a twin, or something more... There were times when Harry would

plainly by not wearing a shirt while he was training her. It would always make her feel pleasantly uncomfortable when he did that...

She was one of those who began to take a late interest in guys, and Harry was perfect in her eyes. Rose took a moment to compose herself before entering the great hall. It was thanks to Harry that she was even able to control her hormones and her temper these days. With occlumency she found she was able to center herself and not lose herself when around a bare chested Harry or when the Slytherins would taunt her.

She wouldn't hesitate to admit it, but she owed Harry a lot as she remembered seeing in his memories about Rita Skeeter's article. In her world, Harry had done something very scary to the cow as Harry called her. Rose remembered overhearing Professor McGonagall telling Dumbledore about how surprised she was that Skeeter's articles about Rose had calmed down and become much more truthful. Thinking of Harry, Rose found herself drifting off into another daydream where he swept her off her feet, her knight in shining armor. "Harry..." Rose whispered dreamily.

He confused her quite a bit. She still wasn't sure what to think of him. Sure, they get along great and had a lot of fun together, but there were times she wanted to know how he felt about her. Did he consider her as a sister, a twin, a friend, or possibly something more?

"Yeah right, I doubt he has feelings for me," Rose grumbled, shaking herself out of her daydream as she sat down for breakfast. As usual this early on a Saturday, the great hall was nearly empty; most of Rose's dorm mates were still sleeping. "What would he ever see in me anyway?"

She didn't know if it was disgusting or not, but she was sure she liked Harry more than Cedric. Her old crush was old news. She saw that he was really a prat if you went past the looks. She had seen the way he let his housemates call her names and taunt her because she was Hogwarts other champion. He didn't even try to stop them as they called her a whore and an attention seeking brat. Ohh, if it weren't for the fact that Harry had ordered her to not attack anyone with her new

spells that was taught to her, she would hex them to oblivion right away.

“Damn, is it wrong for me to like him?” Rose asked herself. “But that would be incest wouldn’t it?” She questioned. Luckily for her, no one was near her at the table or she would have received some odd glances to say the least. “But then, the Purebloods always marry and date their relatives. Would it be wrong for me?”

Harry had left the moment their training session had ended to take care of another horcrux. In the past two weeks, he had successfully destroyed the cup of Helga Hufflepuff and the ‘real’ necklace of Salazar Slytherin. Out of the seven horcruxes that Voldemort created, three of them were already destroyed if you included Tom Riddle’s diary.

According to Harry, the last three Horcruxes that were in need of being destroyed were the crest of Gryffindor, which was located in the Chamber of Secrets, the crown of Rowena Ravenclaw which was located in a hidden cave somewhere in Germany, and lastly, Nagini who was with Voldemort. They would save the snake for last.

Sighing, Rose looked at the small watch on her wrist. She should really take Harry’s advice and go to bed after a few hours of training, but she decided to take a strengthening potion instead. She couldn’t get to sleep with what was on her mind right now. Not to mention, she had to get ready for her date with Harry in Hogsmeade later. He said something about being unable to wait and scare everyone that might think he was the reincarnation of James Potter if he just changed his eyes to brown and his build to be a bit smaller.

“I still haven’t thanked him for doing all this for me,” Rose muttered to herself thinking of how Harry saved her from Rita Skeeter, got Snape to back off, and most of all, being a friend and teaching her for so many things she needed to learn.

“Never mind that, I’ll figure a way to thank him later for helping me. Harry says I need to concentrate more on the first task,” Rose grumbled as Harry was constantly reminding her about her dragon on the first task which was only a few days away. She knew how Harry had retrieved his egg but she didn’t have a broom of her own and

didn't think she could ever match Harry's flying prowess. Harry had refused to help her, saying that she needed to find her own way and not take the easy one by asking him. She needed to take care of herself sometimes and figure out the task on her own.

Rose hurriedly finished her eggs and left the table to head back to her dorm. She needed to get ready for her date and didn't want to deal with any questions from her dorm mates. Entering her room, Rose noticed that Hermione was awake and staring at her while she gathered together her clothes for the day and headed for the shower. Hermione looked like she wanted to say something, and Rose slowed down a bit to give her the chance but instead Hermione buried her face back in her Transfiguration book. Some friend she was...

Speaking of former friends, she heard through the rumor mill that Hermione, Ginny, and Ron were not speaking to each other. She was tired of people asking her why, and didn't really care herself seeing as she was too busy training and studying with Harry. She couldn't explain it, but for some reason, she just didn't care about them anymore...

She thought it was probably because she had bigger fish to fry. After seeing and listening to Harry's future prediction of Voldemort's rebirth and the possibility of her friends dying, maybe it was better they stop being friends, so they wouldn't get hurt.

"Well, at least I have homework and school work to keep me busy," muttered Rose. She needed to thank Harry again for getting her to study harder. She had been surpassing all of her classmates, including Hermione in class with what she had been learning from Harry. Her teachers were extra proud of her and she noticed that the sooner she finished her homework, the less stress she had over the Tri-Wizard Tournament and school work.

She had a lot more free time ever since she had started to improve in her grades.

It was just too bad Harry took advantage of her free time by making her study more. Next time, she would keep her gob shut and not tell Harry about her free time.

(((o)))

Rose ignored the looks that were sent her way by her housemates. Hermione had left the dorm while Rose was in the shower and Parvati and Lavender woke up not long after, and had proceeded to gawk at her as she got dressed. Looking in the mirror, she happily took note that the red spaghetti strap shirt she wore clashed wonderfully with her hair, and the tight black jeans, clearly told her housemates she was out to impress someone.

Harry had bought a bunch of new clothes for her when she grew out of her old ones. She couldn't help but blush when Harry had given her bag full of new clothes and robes, which fitted her perfectly. He had even purchased her some sexy looking underwear and bras. When she asked him curiously how he knew what her size was, Harry blushed furiously and muttered something about polyjuice. Rose had to suppress the urge to kill him when the full implications of that hit her.

Though, he was not sure how much she would continue to grow, he did get her some new larger school robes that did a good job of concealing her new figure from prying eyes.

"Wow Rose, you look absolutely fabulous now! What happened to you?" Parvati finally blurted out when she noticed her roommate primping in front of her mirror. This was not the Rose she knew a month ago that was too shy to wear revealing clothing, not to mention looking good in said clothing. She was pretty sure Rose could grab any guy's attention at Hogwarts now. Rose, her roommate no longer looked to be an eleven-year-old girl but instead looked like a very attractive fourteen year old. To Parvati's jealousy, Rose's chest was starting to be more developed than hers! She was wearing some new feminine clothes that were definitely not her usual old ones. Parvati hated to admit it, but Rose looked prettier than most of the girls at Hogwarts now, even most of the sixth and seventh years.

'Her school robes must have been hiding a lot of her growing figure the past few months,' Parvati thought to herself. She stared at some of the sexy underwear and bras that Rose had pulled out of a muggle shopping bag.

"I started working out and eating healthy," Rose lied smoothly as she brushed her hair hurriedly. Learning occlumency had taught her how to lie easily and not show any flicker of guilt.

"Where did you get those clothes?" Lavender asked with a predatory look that Parvati recognized. Lavender wanted to borrow some of them of Rose's clothing.

"My boyfriend," Rose said automatically. Now why did she say that? Maybe it was because she finally had something to make her dormmates jealous. "My boyfriend got them for me as a gift for being picked as a champion."

"Boyfriend!" shrieked shrieked the two gossip hungry girls. "Who? Tell us!"

Rose took the moment to take a deep breath.

'Why the hell did I say that?' Thought Rose realizing that she just told the two loosest lipped girls in the school that she had a boyfriend. She had a feeling she was going to have to quickly explain to Harry about her mistake, or he would be hounded in Hogsmeade once her so called 'friends' saw him.

"Sorry, but I have to get into Hogsmeade early today," Rose said mentally angry that her house mates were trying to be nice to her, when they were at first, jealous of her of being champion.

Without another word, grabbed her cloak and hastily left her roommates who were groaning at her for ignoring their questions.

As she took a step out of the girls' dormitory, she muttered to herself, "Ohhh, I messed up big..."

(((o)))

"Hi, Harry," Rose said incredibly shyly as the brisk November wind blew her hair into her eyes. She embarrassingly moved her hair away from her face so she could get a good look at him.

He was as handsome as ever...

Today, he was wearing muggle attire like she was. However, his clothes looked to be far more elegant than hers. He was wearing black dress shoes with a matching pair of boot leg black slacks, a beautiful green silk dress shirt, and the most noticeably, she was surprised to see that he had streaked his hair with green highlights. Not only did he resemble a dreamy prince, but his hair told others he was the rebellious type.

Rose couldn't help but blush brightly as when she noticed him checking her over appraisingly.

"Wow Rose, you look beautiful," Harry said smiling at her warmly. "I'd say those health potions are definitely doing their job."

If it was even possible, Rose blushed a darker shade of red.

"I decided to not scare anyone by resembling Prongs today, so I dressed in my everyday muggle clothes."

'If that is your everyday Muggle clothes, damn, I'd love to see what you look when you're dressing to impress.' Rose thought faintly. As she accepted his outstretched hand, she was in a world of her own and didn't notice as other students looked on enviously at the pair.

Harry...

Harry was shocked as he was waiting by the Hogwarts entrance Hall. Rose looked simply stunning! He wouldn't voice it to anyone, but damn, Rose looked even prettier than Ginny!

He mentally patted himself on the shoulder as he had remembered to dress up nicely after he had destroyed the Crest of Gryffindor a while ago and had replaced it with a fake copy should Voldemort consider visiting and checking out the item. He had an odd feeling that Rose was looking forward to this Hogsmeade together as a date. Luckily he dressed up, because he would have most likely embarrassed her as she was dressing very nicely and he would be wearing some normal everyday robes.

"Hi Harry," Rose said in a very shy cute voice.

Harry continued to look at her up and down. He couldn't help but think Rose looked jaw droppingly gorgeous! He didn't have to look far to the future to realize that she would rival a veela in a few years. "Wow Rose, you look beautiful," He said ignoring her bright blush. "I'd say those health potions are definitely doing their job."

Harry held back his laughter when he noticed Rose's blush intensify. He didn't want to give her the wrong idea. "I decided to not scare anyone by resembling Prongs today, so I dressed in my everyday muggle clothes." Harry said softly as offered Rose his hand.

She accepted it and both had set off to Hogsmeade, ignoring the upcoming crowd that was behind them. Harry knew that some of the guys were checking Rose out from behind and that the girls were checking him out from behind. He could *feel* their hungry gazes.

"So what are we going to do today?" asked Rose when she noticed that Harry was watching her intently. She finally managed to get her furious blush under control using her occlumency skills.

"Well, in my pocket is a list of houses. I was planning to buy a house earlier the week I arrived here, but changed my mind. I wanted you to be with me to help me shop for a home."

"I don't know anything about buying houses, Harry," Rose said confused.

"Me neither, but there is a reason I want you to help me choose." Harry smiled kindly down at her. "I want you to come live with me this summer."

Rose's response to this was a hug.

"You really mean that?" said Rose, her eyes sparking with unhidden delight.

"Of course I do! What kind of person would I be if I left you at the Dursleys? Where are you going to go once we get you emancipated? I know the Dursleys are going to try and kick you out right away."

Rose, who was still hugging him, had frozen for one moment, and then hugged him even harder. "Thank you," Rose said quietly. This was a dream come true. She had always dreamt of having a long lost relative come and rescue her from her horrible relatives. The dream had only become better with the addition of Harry. "You're the best."

Harry happily draped his arm over her shoulder, drawing some envious looks from the students. "Come on, let's go check out one of these homes, I heard it's pretty nice."

(((o)))

Two hours later, Rose couldn't help but smile warmly as she walked about Hogsmeade with Harry's arm around her shoulder.

When she told him what she had mistakenly told her roommates, whom she was sure would tell every one at Hogwarts that Rose was dating Harry, she wanted to warn him ahead of time since people were sure to stare and whisper about the two of them. She admitted that she wasn't thinking straight and really just wanted to make them jealous and the first thing she blurted was that she was going to meet her boyfriend...

Surprisingly, Harry understood her position and didn't scold her for reacting like that. He told her that it was because of her age. Since she was still young, she was prone to act a bit immature. Rose was thankful that Harry wasn't angry with her, but at the same time, a bit angry he would say that she was immature. And to top it all off, Harry happily suggested that they go along with it and pretend to be a couple anyway. He was tired of girls of all ages approaching him and trying to talk to him while he was traveling alone in Hogsmeade.

He was worried of course. Once word got around that she had a boyfriend, the Daily Prophet would be buzzing around her like an annoying fly. Dumbledore of course, would probably be trying his best to find out who he was from her former friends and possibly even her, if he could build up the courage to approach her again.

"I'm sorry," Rose apologized again knowing that Harry didn't want any attention. If people discovered who Harry really was, there was a chance that it might affect her upcoming battle with Voldemort.

“Don’t be,” Harry said pulling Rose closer to him. It was funny, because Harry saw a jealous looking Cedric Diggory who was staring at Rose, and Cho, his former date to Hogsmeade, was sighing dreamily at the sight of him. “It’s okay Rose, we all make mistakes and I’m not perfect either. So how about we just enjoy ourselves today, eh?”

“Okay,” Rose said cheerfully. She was still happy that they had finally found a home. The house was under the name Harry Evans, since Harry didn’t want to put Potter or people might be curious to find out who he was. It didn’t take long since Rose almost demanded that Harry buy the third house they looked at. It was love at first sight for her. It looked like the dream house that she had always desired when she was young. It was a three story magical house had been magically made to fit fourteen large rooms. It had a nice size balcony that connected the two master suites and dining room. On top of the large house was a small green house that Harry thought would be useful. He said it would be nice to grow some plants in there since he found gardening soothing.

Oh yeah, and there was a magically expanded area at the back of the house which was large enough for a Quidditch field.

It was quite impressive she had to admit...

“The house was beautiful,” Rose had remembering how she had played rock-paper-scissors with Harry to see who got which master suites. While Harry won and got the bigger and nicer looking one, she was still happy with hers.

“Yeah, I’ll be working on putting up wards starting tonight, while you’re talking with Sirius.” Harry whispered quietly.

“What kind of wards will you put up?” Rose asked, ignoring her excitement at being able to see Sirius later. She had managed to wear down Harry into letting Sirius live with them, once Voldemort was destroyed completely and Peter was captured.

“Oh the usual, key-in Apparation, key-in Port-key, protection wards, muggle repelling wards, and of course, some of the most powerful ones; like the fidelius charm.”

Rose nodded as she lead him to the Three Broomsticks where the majority of her classmates were at.

"Welcome to the Three Broomsticks," said Madam Rosmerta, the woman who owned the Three Broomsticks. "Oh! Hello, Harry, would you like the usual?" Rosmerta asked jovially as she escorted her new recent daily customer to a table. He was just so handsome! If she was just a decade younger, she would definitely consider chasing after him and fulfilling some of her fantasies.

"Yes, thank you Rosmerta." Harry said inclining his head in greeting.

"Okay, one Harry Evan's usual," Rosmerta said making a note to herself. "And it's Rosie, no need to call me by my full name." She giggled as she turned to the person next to him. "What would you like miss.... Oh! Rose Potter!" Rosmerta exclaimed when she noticed the red head. She blinked twice as she began looking at the young girl up and down. "My, my, you look nothing the pictures they have of you in the Daily Prophet."

"I know," Rose muttered softly. "I just recently started working out and eat healthy foods under Harry's eye. Could I get a chicken salad and a butterbeer please?"

"My, my," Rosmerta said as she jotted down Rose's order. "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you two look extraordinary like James and Lily Potter. Graciously me, you two look almost exactly like them...except you Harry. You have green eyes and your physique is much better than James'. No offense Ms. Potter."

While Rose gulped nervously at the Madam's words, Harry played it off easily. "Thank you for the compliment, Rosie," Harry said with a flirtatious wink. Rosmerta giggled girlishly. "I try my best to look nice. You look rather ravishing yourself."

"Why, thank you, Harry," She said with a smirk. "So are you and Rose a couple? I saw you two a while ago holding hands. I saw that nasty reporter Rita Skeeter was going to follow you, but she stopped herself halfway as if she was having a hard time deciding what to do. It was quite the sight mind you," Rosmerta said interestingly as she looked at Rose to Harry, and back again.

"We..." Rose said uncertainly. "We're just friends," she said quietly, not believing her chest began to hurt when she said that.

Rose's comment had caused numerous of eavesdropping girls to cheer silently.

"Sorry, Rosmerta," Harry said as he put his arm around Rose. "Rose is just too shy to admit it out loud, but we're really dating, boyfriend and girlfriend." He said, enjoying the groans from the aforementioned girls.

Rosmerta just blinked.

"Harry?" Rose asked looking at him wide eyed.

Harry said nothing more and kissed Rose discretely on the corner of her mouth. "See, girlfriend." He said to a smiling Rosmerta. "Sorry girls." Harry said to the eavesdropping girls behind them.

Rosmerta chuckled at the sight of Harry breaking so many hearts. Harry Evans resembled James Potter so much that she couldn't help but wonder if he was related to James Potter as she turned around to get their orders.

Rose blushed a brilliant red and felt like she was floating on a cloud.

"We can't just let you take back your words after you told Parvati and Lavender you have a boyfriend now, can we?" Harry said through their mind link while discreetly pointing out a group of gossiping girls in the corner. While Lavender was looking at Harry shamelessly, Parvati was looking on at them suspiciously, in a way that said she did not believe they were a couple.

Rose glowered slightly at the girls and grabbed Harry by the lapels of his shirt, pulling him down and planting a kiss square on his lips. Harry, almost automatically, brushed his tongue against her lips, which made Rose freeze on the spot. She opened her mouth granting Harry access and once again felt like she was on a cloud. Not only had she just initiated her first real kiss, but Harry had just given her, her first tongue kiss.

She shivered in delight at the sensations she was feeling. All thoughts about them pretending to be boyfriend and girlfriend were gone, the only thing that mattered to her was not letting go. Not realizing what she was doing, she wrapped her arms around his neck and held on like her life depended on it.

Neither of them took notice of the people in Three Broomsticks watching them in silence, unable to say anything about the two teens that were kissing direct public.

Breaking off the kiss breathlessly, Rose blushed again and tried to hide her face by snuggling up to him.

Harry reflexively had put his arm around her affectionately, the way a boyfriend would hold his girlfriend. He didn't know what made him slip her some tongue, but he had a feeling that what the two had just started would probably change their future forever.

(((o)))

Dumbledore was stunned speechless at what he was hearing. Hagrid had come in barging into the Great Hall during lunch with the first and second years with Mad-Eye Moody behind him, roaring about how James and Lily Potter were alive and in their teenage years walking around Hogsmeade hand in hand. At first, he wondered about his friend's sanity for a moment, but then that was quickly thrown away when Alastor Moody and Filius Flitwick, who had accompanied the children to Hogsmeade, said they saw it with their own eyes as well.

He shocked everyone in the Great Hall when he rushed out of the great hall, a dire look on his face.

Everyone knew without a doubt that the Headmaster was heading to Hogsmeade at that very moment. Minerva McGonagall, who had heard of this also, hurried after him, surprising everyone that she was able to move that fast at her age. Snape paled considerably at this news, and made his way out as well.

(((o)))

Harry decided that they had had enough excitement for the day and escorted Rose back to the castle after lunch. Looking at her fondly, he was about to kiss her goodbye when he felt an enormous magical presence approaching from the castle. His instincts immediately told him to flee, knowing that the presence was coming for him. Now that he had to hurry, he gave Rose a small kiss on the lips for the spectators watching them and disappeared from the courtyard, leaving her alone and woozy from the kiss.

“Harry?” Rose said confused and dazed from his quick kiss. She had hoped he would have given her a more passionate kiss, but was more confused by his quick departing. She understood when she heard the frantic footsteps approach from the other side of the main gates. When the doors burst open she drew her wand in a flash, but restrained herself when she noticed who it was. The Headmaster and the teachers...

“Lily!” Dumbledore shouted as he ran to catch up with the redhead. “Lily, how are you alive? No, wait...you’re not Lily,” Dumbledore said stopping himself from confusing his own mind.

“How astute, Headmaster,” Rose said dryly, realizing who made Harry leave in such a hurry. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing child,” Dumbledore said bewilderedly when he noticed the girl in before him looked completely different then when he saw her two weeks ago. Could she have really grown up so much in a few weeks without his notice?

“Sorry, but I can’t stay and chat,” She said politely as walked past them and into the castle. She fought hard to control the anger roiling in her at the sight of Dumbledore and his little snake spy. Knowing that she shouldn’t draw attention to herself, she hastily made her way toward Gryffindor tower as the group of Professors hurried off toward Hogsmeade.

(((o)))

Dumbledore sat in his office, pondering over his latest perplexing mystery...

He had asked his fellow teachers to spread out and look for Lily and James, and ask around if anyone had seen them. He made doubly sure the Potions Master was with him, as he knew that James did not trust Severus and things would most likely escalate into a duel, more so if James knew that Severus was indirectly the reason that the Dark Lord targeted the Potters in the first place. For more than an hour, they had run around Hogsmeade and had received less than clear answers...

Some say they thought they saw the ghost of James Potter walking along with his dead wife Lily Evans Potter in their young teenage years...

Others told him that they 'thought' it was James Potter, but at closer view, the James look alike had green eyes, not brown.

The most believable, from Madam Rosmerta and two dozen Hogwarts students, was that he was some person named Harry Evans, The Girl Who Lived's boyfriend.

From the description from Rosmerta, who once had a crush on James Potter back in his school days, the young man looked to be seventeen or eighteen. He was incredibly handsome and well built, more so than James when he was in his prime at Quidditch. He was a recent usual appearing in Hogsmeade for the last week and a half. Also, there was a mysterious air of confidence about him and she knew he was no average wizard.

Dumbledore became extremely worried when Rosmerta had said that the young man was considered to be the boyfriend of Rose Potter, as Rose herself had admitted it.

Harry Evans...

That name was not on the Wizard registry, and nothing was known about him. Harry Evans was either a foreign wizard or a wizard using a fake identity. One thing was certain, the surname Evans struck him as odd as he wrote a letter to Sirius Black. It was Lily Potter's surname...

The boy was said to look just like James and had green eyes like Rose. Was there a connection? Did James and Rose have another child before Rose? If so, how could that be? Lily Evans would have to have been sixteen years old when she birthed Harry. Somehow, Dumbledore doubted the child was related, but couldn't be certain.

'I will have to question young Rose later on this matter, but discreetly.' Dumbledore thought to himself. He was not a fool. He had seen the looks of obvious hatred Ms. Potter had sent him and her Potions Professor. The look of anger and hatred he was expecting toward Severus was expected, but not toward himself. He didn't know what had done to invoke the young Ms. Potter's wrath, but he was quite sure he *did* do something and it had something to do with this Harry Evans.

He understood though, why Rose had stopped eating in the great hall during meal times; instead choosing to eat in the kitchens with the elves. She didn't like the attention she was receiving, regardless of what Severus had told him about her being an attention seeking brat. Rose Potter was nothing but humble in his eyes, though that had recently begun to change. According to her Head of House, Rose Potter's grades had recently sky rocketed to a level which rivaled Ms. Granger, her former best friend. Whether it was theory or practical, she was the top of her class now. She had even showed talent beyond O.W.L.S. when a seventh year prefect in Gryffindor noticed her wordlessly summoning a book from the girls dormitory to Gryffindor common room.

It was common news around Hogwarts about the rift between Ms. Potter, Ms. Weasley, Ms. Granger, and Mr. Weasley. While Rose Potter seemed fine on her own, the other three Gryffindors were not doing so well. Ms. Ginny Weasley's grades were clearly dropping as of late, as well as her brother Mr. Ron Weasley's. As for Ms. Granger, she was still doing fine, but she was noticeably quieter in class and less voluntary in participating as Ms. Potter seemed to be more than a match for her. He considered it might be best this way for Rose Potter, as her grades had improved enormously and her potential of defeating Tom Riddle had increased much without the distraction of her former best friends.

Hopefully, the Prophecy involving the young Rose Potter defeating Voldemort would eventually come true if Rose's abilities continued to skyrocket like they are now.

However, the young Ms. Potter's attitude had been completely overwhelming. News from her Head of House of Rose's cruel comments to the young Malfoy heir whenever he opened his mouth around her was as bad as Hagrid accidentally revealing the truth. Whenever there was a confrontation between the two fourth years, it was always Draco that left having been burned and humiliated in front of the entire school. It seemed that she no longer reacted visibly angry at the direct insults from the Malfoy heir. On the contrary, she seemed to only smirk in a way which promised pain in the future.

He would not have believed his Deputy Headmistress had he not seen it for himself. The young girl was cleverly able to control her emotions as of late, ever since it was revealed to him about her talent as a natural Occlumencer.

"Albus, what do you think of this?" Minerva McGonagall, his deputy Headmistress who had been sitting quietly in front of him the whole time. She had finally decided to break the silence when she noticed her boss had been in deep thought for a good five to ten minutes.

"I do not know Minerva. I have theories, but none seem to make any sense," Dumbledore said to his Deputy successor.

"Let's hear them, Albus," McGonagall said impatiently. The other teachers behind her, less Snape, each nodded eagerly as well.

"It is possible, that James and Lily could have had another child that we did not know about," Raising his hand to stop the excited chatter, he spoke again. "I do not believe that is the case. I have another theory. It is possible, that this child could be related to James as his son and not Lily's child."

Dumbledore's sentence was met by McGonagall's gasp. "Are you saying that James was unfaithful to Lily? I find that hard to believe Albus, as much of a heartbreaker as James was in his day, he would never do that to Lily. He loved the girl too much!"

Snape just sneered before Dumbledore could reply. "Actually Minerva, it makes sense. I would not put it past Potter to..."

"I am sorry to say Severus," Filius Flitwick interrupted coldly, surprising everyone with the tone of his voice. Both James and Lily had been his favorite students. He never did like the way Severus would badmouth his former favorite students in front of him. "But that does *not* make sense. Rosmerta and George, the manager at Scrivenshaft's both said that the young man had bright green eyes like Lily's. As I recall, there was no person at Hogwarts during their time that had green eyes as bright as Lily, except perhaps Sinistra."

Professor Sinistra, the beautiful young Astronomy teacher and an old friend and roommate of Lily Potter's, looked on embarrassedly as everyone looked at her. It was true she had green eyes, but not as beautiful or bright as her old friend Lily Evans. Sinistra's were more sea green. Though she would never admit it, she had a soft spot for the young Rose Potter, the daughter of her former roommate and good friend. She didn't want to show obvious favoritism the way her colleague Severus Snape showed Draco Malfoy though.

It was common knowledge that back in the day, she had huge crush on James Potter. The only reason why she never went for James was that Lily had called first dibs on James since their third year, regardless of the fact that she told James she wasn't interest in him. She was just waiting for him to lose his big head before she would make her move.

"What?" she blurted. "Yes, I fancied James, but that didn't mean I was going to backstab my friend by having an affair with her boyfriend!" Seeing Snape sneer at her, Sinistra couldn't help but take a stab at the Slytherin Head of House. "I'm a Gryffindor. I'm loyal to my friends, unlike the Slytherins who wouldn't hesitate to back stab their own friends for their own personal gain. Sounds familiar Severus?"

"Sinistra!" Dumbledore thundered out angrily at her clear jab at the Head of Slytherin. Sinistra was properly cowed but couldn't hide her smirk at the furious look on Severus Snape.

Filius Flitwick was trying his best to cover up his chuckle, much to Sinistra's amusement. She had always liked the Charms Professor, as he was her favorite Professor, next to Professor Slughorn.

"That is enough! We are here to talk about this Harry Evans, not talk about old rivalries."

"Why don't we just drag the young orphan Champion up here and question her?" Snape said icily as he was glared at the Astronomy teacher who continued to smirk at him. He was finding it difficult to contain his anger. Hagrid snarled viciously at Snape's orphan comment.

"Severus! Behave yourself!" Dumbledore said fighting the headache that was building. Sometimes, it was as if he was babysitting children. He knew that some adults had the tendency to act immature at times but this was clearly not one of them.

"My apologies Headmaster," Snape said, not sounding really sorry at all.

"You are all dismissed. I will deal with this problem later." Dumbledore said wanting to avoid telling his colleagues that he really did not think questioning Rose Potter was smart right now, as the girl was angry at him for some sort of reason. He was also tired of the little spat between his colleagues. When will they ever learn that they are strong when they are united and weak while they are divided?

Chapter 7

Rose sighed contentedly as she lay back against the backboard of her bed. Since Harry had entered her life, things had begun to look brighter. With the notable exception of not having reconciled her friendship with Ron, Hermione, and Ginny again, everything in her life was pretty awesome. She was now the top of her class in every subject, except for Potions and History, though only the Slytherins were better in potions. Other than that, she was number one!

She sighed again as she gazed at the stars shining in the window...

After her date with Harry, she had been grilled for information by nearly every girl in Gryffindor tower. Lavender and Parvati were very jealous at her, for finding someone as hot as Harry.

In just two days she would be competing in the first task and facing off with her dragon. Hopefully, she would get the weakest of the Dragons and not the Hungarian Horntail like Harry had to face off against. Lord, please have mercy on her soul, that Hungarian Horntail looked humongous and very scary.

"Thanks a lot, Ron," muttered out Rose. An hour ago, Ron had interrupted her in the middle of her floo conversation with Sirius, panicking Sirius just as he was going to tell her how to defeat her dragon. Though she hated to lie to Sirius, Harry told her that she should pretend she didn't know anything about why she had been entered in the tournament. Sirius would no doubt report back to Dumbledore about everything he learned and that information could give the Headmaster clues that Harry didn't want him to have.

Speaking of the Headmaster, if it were even possible, Rose was even angrier with him.

The 'Old Coot', which Harry had dubbed him, had the nerve to ask her godfather to ask her about why she was so angry toward him! At first, she didn't believe Harry when he told her that Sirius would no doubt follow Dumbledore like a blind goat because Dumbledore was the only person who could help him find his freedom, but just a while ago, her proof was shining right in front of her. Heck, Sirius even

asked her why was she showing such hostility towards the greasy Potions Master, Snape.

It was because of Harry that she didn't tell Sirius that Snape was the reason why she had no parents. There was not doubt in her mind that if she told Sirius that, he would tear Snape limb from limb and break away from Dumbledore and the light. Harry warned her that it was for the best that she didn't reveal anything to anyone, not until after Voldemort's defeat. Things were already changing for her and Harry didn't want to change things too much, lest his foreknowledge be rendered useless.

"How am I'm going to beat that dragon now?" Rose groaned to herself. She snuggled closer to her pillow. She didn't know how to defeat her dragon and Harry would not give her any help. He expected her to already know how to handle a dragon. After all, he had been tutoring her in almost every subject that was taught at Hogwarts and some that were probably forbidden the past few weeks. She learned more about spells and theory from Harry in a month, than what she learned the past three year she had been studying at Hogwarts!

She suddenly regretted avoiding the fake Alastor Moody, who was trying as discreetly as possible, to make her trust him and corner her privately. He was quite the sneaky bastard, and she caught him numerous times tailing her and she tried her best to avoid him. It was even more difficult for her to avoid him considering that he was her teacher for DADA!

McGonagall had once warned her about the dangers of trusting men. Don't ever find yourself alone with a wizard who you may not particularly trust. There is always a chance that they might try and over power you, rape you, and then obliviate you so that you won't remember. Harry, though, had assured her that should anyone hit her with an unexpected spell he would know since they were mind linked. It worked like a notifying charm, and Harry would instantly be there to protect her.

When she asked him how he would be able to rescue her faster than anyone, he described to her that he was a phoenix animagus, so he

was capable of flame-teleporting to any place or anywhere in the world. No magical ward in the world would be able to prevent him from reaching her, (Unless they knew the animagus prevention ward, he muttered under his breath).

'I wonder what my animagus form will be?' thought Rose excitedly. From what Harry had told her, magical animagi transformations were rare. Rose was impressed beyond belief when she heard that Harry was the first magical animagus in six hundred years and the first to ever become a phoenix. Then she remembered hearing Harry mumble that he had another transformation, one that he said would no doubt strike fear into the heart of anyone that stood in his way.

She was curious to know what it was, but Harry refused to tell her, even when she gave him the adorable puppy eye pout.

"No, I got to stop thinking about Harry and worry about the first task!" Rose said hitting herself on the head with her pillow. She was relieved that she had cast a silencing charm around her bed earlier. She didn't want her roommates overhearing her, since she had the habit of thinking out loud. No longer tired or sleepy, she tried her best to think of a way to get around her dragon, but nothing came to mind. Finally giving up, she decided to swallow her pride and beg Harry for help.

"Harry...?" Rose said opening her mind link.

Harry didn't reply. Her link with him was silent for a good five minutes.

"Harry...? Where are you?" Rose asked again, but this time, with a bit of concern. She felt oddly empty. Usually, Harry would respond to her right away.

"Rose," Harry finally replied back. **"Did you need something?"**

"What's up?" She asked, her voice filled with confusion and a little bit of hurt. **"You never take this long to respond to me."**

"I'm making a few Potions, Harry said sending an image of himself standing in front of a few small cauldrons. **"It requires absolute concentration and I can't afford to make a single mistake."**

Rose's confusion could be felt across the link. **"What kind of Potions?"**

"If I told you, you would most likely ask me to make you one." Harry said continuing to stir his potion.

"Come on, tell me!" Rose said sending an image of a pout.

"A potion for lots of good luck and a few others," Harry said not feeling like arguing, since he was busy paying attention to the bubbling potion.

"Felix Felicis," Rose said with a bit of awe. Harry was right, she definitely wanted one. **"I remember hearing you lecture me about that. That potion takes months to make and the ingredients are very expensive! It's known to make a person extremely lucky!"**

Harry shrugged through the link. **"Three and a half actually,"** He added as he covered the cauldron up and moved on to another potion.

"What are you going to use it for?" Rose asked.

"For Voldemort's resurrection," Harry said preparing the potion. **"I'm going to need all the luck I can get when I go against him."**

"But I thought that he would be at his weakest form. Why would you need luck?" Rose questioned.

"Rose, don't ever assume everything will go to plan," Harry said shaking his head. **"I have to prepare for the worst. Not only will I be dueling against Voldemort, but once he summons all of his Death Eaters to that graveyard, I will be fighting them as well."**

"What about those traps that you said you were going to use? Won't you be using them?"

Harry couldn't help but roll his eyes.

“Rose, will you just let me work?” He said impatiently. **“Yes, I’ll be using those trap spells, but I need to use a luck potion to make sure everything goes in my favor as well.”**

Rose muttered an apology when she noticed that she was getting on his nerves. She didn’t want Harry to be angry with her.

“So why did you open our link connection up? I know it’s not because you’re bored.” Harry said feeling her uneasiness.

Not wanting to play games or hide things from him, she simply blurted it out. **“I’m so screwed, I can’t think of a way to past my dragon and I need some advice.”** She moaned.

Harry who was stirring his potion, twitched slightly at her words. **“Rose, did you even try and ask any of your friends?”** he said levelly.

“I don’t have friends Harry,” Rose said reminding him of her friend’s breakup. **“I was about to get information from Sirius, but Ron had came in interrupting our conversation and scared Sirius away.”**

Harry nodded in understanding. It had been the same in his old dimension. **“I know I shouldn’t be helping you, since I’ve been spoiling you lately,”** Harry said cheekily, ignoring Rose who was protesting loudly. **“But since you’ve been a good girl, I’ll help you.”**

“Spoiling me lately? How have you been spoiling me lately?” Rose snapped angrily.

Harry sighed exasperatedly. **“Let’s see, I’ve been helping you get physically stronger and faster, teaching you spells that you are not supposed to learn at all, and of course, I promised to give you animagus training once your health training comes to a end, which is somewhere after this week finishes. Shall I continue?”** Harry said a bit coldly.

Rose had the decency to blush. She was glad Harry was not able to see her blushing. **“Sorry...”** She murmured out.

Harry smirked in reply. **“Anyhow, you said you want to find a way to get past your dragon?”** Harry asked.

Rose nodded meekly through the link.

“First off, can you tell me what you know about dragons?”

Rose didn't know as much as she should, and embarrassedly began to recite what she did. **“Dragon's have magic resistant skin which makes them immune to most magical spells. They can fly, breathe fire, and they are very protective of their hatchlings.”** Rose said not being able to remember reading about anything else.

Harry sighed. Harry decided to cut her some slack, though he knew he shouldn't. **“Try doing what I did to get around my dragon. Use a broomstick, it's safer, convenient, and doesn't require you to perform any high level spells in front of everyone,”** Harry said softly. He remembered hearing the red head once telling him that she was an excellent flyer, and a chaser on the quidditch team.

“I don't have a broomstick Harry, remember? After the willow broke my Nimbus I just used one of the school brooms.”

Harry sighed. He completely forgot about that little fact. **“Can you borrow one from someone?”** He asked weakly. Rose sent a mental image of herself shaking her head.

“I can't, people might be suspicious if I ask them to let me borrow their broom before the task and no doubt Dumbledore...”

“Will be suspicious as to how you knew you were going to need your broom,” Harry said finishing her sentence for her.

Rose nodded.

Harry really considered buying her one, but was not sure if it would be wise. He was sure that there would be questions asked and fingers pointed. **“Hey, speaking of using a broom. Have you mastered the Summoning Charm yet?”** Harry asked sternly

Rose nodded a bit testily. **“Yes *master*,”** Rose said rolling her eyes. Harry had been teaching her so many spells... he sometimes forgot what spells he taught her unless she reminded him.

“Don’t use that tone with me, young lady,” Harry said in mock anger. **“Okay, how’s this, I’ll lend you my Firebolt, but not the one that Sirius gave me though, a different and later model. I don’t use the one that Sirius gave me since it’s kind of precious. I have another Firebolt that I use in its place. It’s called the Firebolt Zero. It’s three times faster than the original Firebolt. In *my* world, only nine of these babies were made and they cost as much as five times as more than a regular Firebolt.”**

Though Rose didn’t know much about brooms, she knew that this Firebolt Zero was fast. She remembered Ron telling her once that the Firebolt was the fastest broom in the entire world. Also, one Firebolt cost more than all the Slytherins Nimbus 2001 brooms together!

“Okay, I’ll take it! Thanks Harry, you’re the best!” She said cheerfully.

Harry smiled sheepishly. **“Prepare to wake up early Rose. We won’t have any training, instead, we’ll be concentrating on your flying skills and summoning charm tomorrow. I want you to have plenty of rest before you perform the first task on Tuesday.”**

Rose nodded. Though she may be an excellent flyer, Harry’s broom sounded like it took a bit to handle.

(((o)))

“Ohhh... I’m so tired.” Rose groaned, flopping down on the sofa in the sitting room in Harry’s new house.

Harry, who was cooking breakfast, raised an eyebrow. He wasn’t a least bit exhausted. After performing three hours of flying with the Time-Turner’s help, both returned back to Harry’s home in Hogsmeade for some rest. “You’d better make sure you take a few strengthening potions before you go perform your first task then, you’re going to need it.”

Rose had only grunted in an unladylike way. She knew she should be heading back to Hogwarts right about now as class had already started, but she really didn't care at this point. She needed rest...

For several minutes, there was silence, except for the noise Harry was making in the kitchen. "Do you want anything specific?" Harry asked.

He was answered with silence.

"Rose?" Harry called out from the kitchen. Nothing. Turning the stove switch to low heat, he walked out into the sitting room to check on the pretty red head. From the look of things, Rose was in a deep sleep, exhaustion clearly shown on her young face.

"Are you asleep?" Harry asked redundantly, making sure she really was asleep.

Seeing that she was indeed asleep, Harry placed a warm blanket over her and went on with his daily business.

Embarrassed and not knowing why, he kissed her on the forehead and went back to the kitchens, not seeing Rose smile in contentment.

(((o)))

Rose walked into the Great Hall looking extremely tired and annoyed. Harry had let her sleep for a few hours before waking her for some more flying practice. This time, he had her to dodge eight bludgers at once while she was flying. Sweat drenched her robes making them cling to her body, showing her developing figure, much to the boys' enjoyment. Right as she was about to sit down at the lonely side of the Gryffindor table for some dinner, a stern looking McGonagall marched up to her.

The red head groaned silently, knowing right then that she should have eaten in the kitchens again. She had only entered the great hall by habit and was too tired to leave.

"Ms. Potter, just where have you been?" The Transfiguration teacher said sternly, grabbing the majority of the attention in the Great Hall.

"Where have I've been?" She repeated tiredly, not understanding the question. She tugged the collar of her shirt to keep it from sticking to her torso.

McGonagall narrowed her eyes disapprovingly at Rose's appearance. "Ms. Potter, you were not present in Herbology today nor were you present in Divination. Care to tell me why you skipped class?"

Rose, not really in the mood to be scolded and embarrassed in front of the whole school, narrowed her eyes angrily at the transfiguration teacher. Not only did she have to put up with people insulting her or teasing her about the first task on her way to the Great Hall, but now she was being lectured. It was as if everyone was just out to get her these days.

"I'm sorry Professor," Rose said through her clenched teeth. Not only was she losing respect for the Headmaster, but was losing all the respect she had for all of her teachers. None of them would help her with the stress and teasing these days since she became Champion. "I didn't feel well, so I slept in this morning."

"Slept in?" The Transfiguration teacher said incredulously, while throwing a glare at some of the students who were sniggering.

Rose nodded, ignoring the sniggering around her.

"I find that hard to believe Ms. Potter. Ms. Granger told me you were not in your bed this morning when she woke up and I doubt you would sleep in all the way past lunch as well."

Rose narrowed her eyes angrily at Hermione who was sitting several seats away and back at the Transfiguration teacher who was getting on her case. She spoke in an icy voice that echoed throughout the Great Hall, causing everyone to shiver. "What is it with this place? Why the hell am I always being singled out? Plenty of people skip class for a day and they don't even garner a second glance! When I skip a class period, not only do you not believe me, but you lecture me and try to embarrass me in front of the entire school!"

"Ms. Potter," McGonagall interrupted shakily. "I am not..."

"I'm not finished talking yet!" Rose screamed, standing and glowering at the aged woman. Her magic began to react to her anger, causing the room to shake a bit. All the utensils in the Great Hall were rattling insanely. "Ever since I became Hogwarts's stupid champion, you and the Hogwarts staff have been done nothing but allow people to slander and insult me! When I try to defend myself, you and every other staff teacher reprimand me and ignore the rest! No one understands what I have to go through and no one even cares or believes that I did not *want* to be champion. It is bad enough I have to put up with turncoat friends and a school full of whispering idiots who are too deaf to hear the truth, but to have my own teachers treating me with hidden hostility? Well you know what Professor? I don't really give a damn anymore. You, the Headmaster, the Tri-Wizard Tournament, this school, and the wizarding world! You can all go sod OFF for all I care!"

Standing up, she left quickly before her transfiguration teacher could recover from her shock. As she left, she didn't even notice that the Great Hall had finally stopped rattling from her raw magic. Rose left a speechless Great Hall nearly in tears, not even knowing where she was going. She didn't know why she had snapped at her transfiguration teacher like that but she didn't regret it.

"They deserve it, her and this entire damn school. They are just like Malfoy and his goons. They continue to tease me and insult me and not a single damn person in this school comes to my defense or trusts me. They all treat me like I'm some spoiled brat or some fragile little child. They all think I chose to be champion. Don't they see that I don't even want to be Champion? Don't they know that I just want to be a regular girl?" Rose hissed angrily as her eyes filled with tears. "Well, screw it all, after this tournament, I'm out of here. I hate this place."

While Rose was walking towards the kitchens with a mixture of anger and tears, she didn't notice a pair of old blue eyes staring at her back sorrowfully.

(((o)))

“Thank you Dobby,” Rose said to the House elf once she managed to calm herself down. She had to thank Harry for showing her the kitchens, a place where she can eat without being pointed and whispered at.

“You are welcome Rose Potter,” Dobby said in an excited voice. “Would you like more tea Rose Potter?”

Rose nodded gratefully. “Sure, thank you again Dobby.” Being thanked by the great Rose Potter, the girl who lived, was too much for the little elf and Dobby broke out in sobs as he poured a cup of tea. Giggling slightly at how excited Dobby was to serve her, she turned back to the plate of food in front of her with a morose expression.

She did not feel a bit of regret when she thought about her one-sided yelling match with the transfiguration teacher. In all honestly, she thought McGonagall deserved it. It wouldn’t have been all that bad if McGonagall had pulled her into her office and then reprimanded her, but to scold her in front of the entire Great Hall? That was going overboard.

“Here you go Ms. Potter,” Dobby said rushing back toward The Girl Who Lived with a cup of tea in one hand and a kettle of tea in the other.

Before Rose could thank the House-Elf for his services, there was a burst of blue fire in front of her. When she opened her eyes she gasped. Floating before Rose, was a beautiful white phoenix. The phoenix lighted on the table and seemed to be smirking at her, oddly enough. The bird was almost entirely white except for the tips of its tail and wing feathers which were a light sky blue that faded to gold. Rose thought it was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

“Hello Rose. It would seem that you have started quite the stir downstairs.” The phoenix trilled in a musical tone, but in Rose’s mind, she understood what it was trying to say.

“What the...” Rose gasped in shock.

The phoenix let out another musical trill. This time, it sounded as if it was laughing. **“Do you know who I am, Rose?”** The phoenix sang.

Rose could only shake her head.

The House Elves, who were going about their daily business, couldn't help but stop and watch the magical light creature standing in front of one of their young masters. They had never seen the powerful light creature before, beyond Fawkes. There were only a handful of wizards and witches in the world who were bonded with a phoenix, including the Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore.

The Phoenix released another trill which sounded like laughter. That was when it hit Rose like a jolt of electricity. "H-Harry...?" Rose said in shock when she realized the Phoenix before had some semblance to her crush. The feathers that made up the birds crest were extremely ruffled like Harry's jet black messy hair. His eyes... crystal bright green eyes looked exactly like Harry's.

"Congratulations, you figured it out!" The Emerald Phoenix trilled cheerfully.

Rose could only gape in shock.

"This... this is your Ani..."

The phoenix nodded to her before she could finish the sentence.

"Yes, my phoenix animagus form. You like it, don't you?" The Phoenix trilled playfully.

Rose nodded. Harry's Phoenix form looked very beautiful. "Wow..." She said petting the bird absentmindedly.

"Ahh, that feels good. Yes, scratch me right there. Ooh, that feels good," The phoenix gave a trill of excitement and enjoyment, much to Rose's amusement.

"What brings you here?" Rose spoke out, after five minutes of scratching the phoenix.

"First off, don't talk out loud. There's a chance one of the eavesdropping House Elves might tell Dumbledore whatever you say. Just speak to me as if we are using our mind link." The

phoenix trilled. **“Now, as to what am I’m doing here. I was watering the green house upstairs when Hogwarts told me that you threw a bit of a temper tantrum at Professor McGonagall. Mind telling me why? I felt your aura all the way in Hogsmeade.”**

Rose had the decency to look embarrassed.

“Well,” Rose thought sadly. **“After our flying session, while I was walking to the Great Hall, there were some people wishing me luck for the first task tomorrow and there were some... no... a lot of people who were teasing me and telling me they would have a hospital bed ready for me after the 1st Task. At first, I tried to ignore them by using my occlumency shields, but when I bumped into a pack of Hufflepuffs, with Cedric standing by them, they...”**

“Immediately teased and insulted you.” Harry finished her sentence for her. Inwardly, he was a bit surprised that Rose had a much more powerful magical core than he did in his fourth year, but then again, with the daily training he had been giving her lately, it did not surprise him as much.

“Sort of,” Rose said tears threatening to spill from her eyes again. She couldn’t believe her former crush could act so mean! **“Cedric was so cruel and mean. He told me that I was stealing Hufflepuff’s glory and he hoped that I would fail in the first task. He had even made some lewd comments when he noticed how much I grown. He and some of his friends asked me how much I was for a day and how much I charged for an hour.”**

Harry, who was still in his Phoenix form, narrowed his eyes darkly at the Hufflepuff’s attitude. When he had first heard Cedric letting Hufflepuff tease and insult Rose, he didn’t quite believe it. Back in his old dimension, Cedric wasn’t that type of guy. Then again, he really didn’t know Cedric that well, only by what other people told him, mainly girls. Hearing Rose saying Cedric was being mean to her and making those foul comments made Harry’s blood boil.

“I see...” Harry replied, as he released a beautiful trill, which immediately cheered the red head up. Inwardly, he promised future pain to a certain Hufflepuff Champion. **“Rose, don’t you worry**

about Cedric. We'll see how *he* does in the first task tomorrow. While you already know about the dragon, I doubt he knows that he will be facing it, since no one is willing to share that information with him. If it makes you feel any better, I hope he ends up in the hospital for a few weeks."

Rose immediately giggled. **"Harry! You're terrible, but thank you for trying to cheer me up,"** Rose said giving the Phoenix a hug.

If phoenixes could blush, Harry would have clearly blushed as he was pushed closely against Rose's chest. 'Curse these teenage hormones!' Harry grumbled mentally. Why exactly did he have to be eighteen years old again? Why couldn't he keep his twenty-two year old body, where he could at least control his emotions better?

When Rose had released him, she spoke to Harry cheerfully. **"Hey, what spells are you planning to teach me next?"** asked Rose.

Harry shrugged, an odd expression coming from a bird. **"I really don't know. After another week of heavy physical training and exercising, we'll be able to focus on your animagus training should you pass your occlumency test."**

Rose grinned. **"That's what I wanted to hear, animagus training!"** Rose giggled. Seeing that Harry was capable of turning into a phoenix, she couldn't help but get excited at the thought of being able to be an animagus, possibly a phoenix like Harry. Since she was his female counter-part, there was a real possibility that she could be a phoenix as well!

Pretending that he didn't hear her, Harry continued to speak in her mind, **"If your occlumency training goes well, we'll work on your animagus training as promised. After animagus training, we will work on your dueling skills. So far, I've only taught you offensive and shielding spells. Eventually, I will show you a few techniques and tricks you can use in dueling."** Thinking for a second, Harry spoke again. **"From what I've seen in your weapons training, I don't think you will be suited in using a broadsword as a weapon."** Harry said as he thought about Rose's late night weapons training the past few weeks. After several mock lessons

with many different weapons, he considered it was best she used a light weapon.

One thing was for certain; the sword would have to be a one handed weapon so Rose could use her wand in her other hand like Harry did. **“You’d probably be suited to a rapier or dagger...something like that. Perhaps even a whip, if the sword could turn into one,”** Harry suggested playfully at the red head who blushed bright red.

“So,” Rose said, fighting the mental images that caused the blush, and trying to move on. **“I have to choose one of those weapons?”**

The phoenix nodded. **“A great-sword or broadsword is much too heavy for you, Rose. You need a one hand weapon and something that is light and small. You don’t have to choose a weapon now. When we begin your dueling lessons, we’ll worry about your weapon of choice then.”**

Rose nodded, but there was something bugging her. **“Harry, will you also teach me Martial Arts?”** she asked hopefully.

Harry thought for a moment. **“Honestly, I’m not that great when it comes to hand to hand. I’m pretty average when it comes to Martial Arts. When I was training myself to stop Voldemort, I didn’t really focus on brawling much,”** Harry explained.

“Anyhow,” Harry said ruffling his feathers. **“Do you want me to accompany you tomorrow to the first task as a phoenix? You can tell everyone that I’m your new familiar, but I have feeling you will no doubt attract more attention if I accompanied you.”**

“I really don’t care what they think,” Rose snapped angrily. **“They can all drown themselves in the Black Lake for all I care,”** Rose growled out. Out of everyone in the magical world, the only person who seemed to listen to her and treat her with care these days was Harry. Though there were times she was frustrated and dying to know how Harry felt toward her. Did he like her like a sister, just a friend, or possibly something more? If anything, their date and kiss only confused her more.

Little did Rose know that she was broadcasting her thoughts to Harry through their mental link without even knowing it! That was when Rose made up her mind. She would confront him right now and ask him how he felt about her. 'Come on Rose, use that Gryffindor courage,' she said to herself. Facing the phoenix who was sipping a cup of tea that Dobby had brought over, she opened her mouth to speak but before she could say something, Harry's head snapped up and he looked at the wall on the far side of the kitchen, as if he could see through it. She wasn't sure, but did Harry look afraid?

Then, before she could ask anything about it, Harry vanished in a ball of blue fire. She blinked for a few seconds and then jumped slightly when she heard Harry again in her head.

"Moody is coming and I think he is trying to spy on you again. Though I'm sure he didn't see me with that blasted magical eye of his, I can't let him think you have a phoenix as a pet. It might ruin our plans. I forgot about Crouch junior being there. I guess me coming to the first task as your pet Phoenix is out of question now." Harry said through their mental link.

Again, before Rose could say anything, Harry closed their mental link, but not before saying, **"Make sure you get some sleep, you're going to need it tomorrow. Also, don't take any Potions. They might try and accuse you of cheating if they found out you were using strengthening potions."**

Rose sighed.

(((o)))

"What!" Sirius shouted, his voice sounding extra loud in the confines of the small cottage. Remus nodded to his old Marauder buddy. Remus Lupin, against the Headmaster's wishes had decided to tell his former classmate and longtime friend, Sirius Black about Rose and her 'boyfriend'.

"You heard me, Padfoot," Remus said somberly. "Dumbledore says there's a young teenager in Hogsmeade that looks like James, but he has green eyes like Rose."

The infamous criminal Sirius Black gaped slack jawed at Remus. "Are you saying that it is possible James and Lily had another child without even telling us?" Sirius asked in disbelief.

Remus nodded again, but this time, he had a frustrated look on his face. "It's possible, but Dumbledore doesn't know yet. He's trying to find out if this Harry Evans is related to James and Lily, but he has yet to meet him himself. We only have proof of this guy's existence from various people in Hogsmeade, including Rosmerta."

"But..." Sirius said not knowing what to say or do.

Remus continued to speak, but with a strange look on his face. "Sirius I don't know if you know or not, but this guy is supposedly Rose's boyfriend. People are claiming that they heard it from Rose herself. Did she say anything to you when you were talking to her the other day?"

Sirius, shocked again to hear that his goddaughter was now seeing someone, didn't respond.

"Padfoot old buddy, are you okay?" Remus said noticing his friend was in shock.

"Boyfriend," Sirius said not believing what he was hearing. "Rosie has a boyfriend? Why didn't she tell me this? She didn't even tell me *anything* this!"

"She didn't?" Remus said not believing what he was hearing. "What did you two talk about then?"

"Stuff..." Sirius muttered sheepishly, not being able to remember what the two of them had talked about. The only thing he could remember was, "She's sad because everyone thinks she put her name in the Goblet of Fire. She thinks everyone is turning against her, including the teachers who won't stop others from teasing her."

"What!" Remus yelled. "I heard nothing of this from Dumbledore! What else did Rose talk about and what about Hermione, Ginny, and Ron? I thought they were all best friends? Surely they would be there for her."

Sirius, who had finally snapped himself out of his stupor that his little goddaughter was now dating, spoke in a serious voice. "I know, Dumbledore didn't tell me about that either. Also, Rose wasn't forthcoming about it, but from what I can understand, she doesn't have many friends at the moment. Hermione, Ginny, and Ron have all turned against her and they all believe that she put her name in the Goblet of Fire too."

"No way Padfoot, Ron I can understand, but Ginny and Hermione? You're mad!" Remus said sounding scandalized.

Sirius rolled his eyes and spoke in a grim voice. "Believe it Moony. Anyway, I gave Dumbledore an earful a few days ago when I read a letter that Rose gave me. Did you know that greasy git Snivellus was using legillimency on her and her classmates for the past few years? I don't know too much but it looks like Rose discovered that she had natural occlumency shields and she discovered that both Dumbledore and Snape had been using 'discreet' legillimency on her."

Remus had no comment. He was steam rolling right now. He couldn't believe what he had just heard. The Headmaster of Hogwarts was using legillimency on James and Lily's child? That greasy git Snivellus was using legillimency on his best friend's daughter?

"Get this," Sirius said suddenly laughing. "Rose threatened to have Snape fired if he didn't get his act together. From what I understand, the overgrown bat is actually being civil to her now. Oh, here comes the good part, she even threatened to press charges on Dumbledore for hiring a biased teacher and is willing to transfer out of Hogwarts if he doesn't set Snape straight!" There was a definite increase in Sirius laughter.

"Threatened..." Remus said in shock. "Did you just say Rose threatened Dumbledore and Snape?"

Sirius nodded with a gleeful look on his face. "Yeah, I'm really proud of her. She threatened to transfer out of Hogwarts because of Snape! From what Rose told me, Dumbledore is keeping Snape on a tight leash and not letting him step out of line ever again. Ooh, I would just love to see him right now and laugh in his face!" Sirius snickered.

“Sirius!” Remus chastised his friend. “If I didn’t know you any better, I say you are actually cheering Rose on in becoming a teenage rebel!”

Sirius shrugged.

“Every teenager has to go through that stage. Who am I to do to stop her? From what I understand, the Dursleys have never given her a normal life and I’m going to let her experience what she would want: To be treated like every other normal teenager out there. Would it be wrong for us as her parent’s last friends to let her have what she wants, instead of what we want for her?”

Remus blinked. “Padfoot that has got to be the most mature thing I have ever heard coming out of your mouth.”

Sirius shrugged nonchalantly. “It happens occasionally. Besides, I’m just treating Rose the way my parents would never allow me to behave. I want my goddaughter to have everything, including her own life. I may not like the face that she’s dating some guy, but I want her to trust me and know that I support her all the way.”

Remus was yet again, speechless. “Are you really Sirius Black?” Remus said in shock.

Padfoot’s response to that was a slap to the back of the head. “Besides, we just might make a mauler of her yet.” He joked. “Moony, let’s get back to the subject at hand. This guy Harry Evans is it? Why doesn’t Dumbledore just ask Rose about him?”

Remus shrugged. “He won’t say, but after hearing what you told me about Rose confronting Dumbledore, which I’d like to say I am proud of her, I would say Dumbledore wishes things to cool down before he approaches her again.”

“Tell me about it, you should have seen the look of anger on her face when I told her Dumbledore asked me to ask her why she was so angry at him and Snape. Moony old buddy, you should have seen the look on her face. She looked like a dragon ready to pounce on me. The next time Dumbledore asks me to ask Rose something, I’m just going to tell him to go ask her himself. She looked really scary and I could have sworn I could feel the magic coming out of her.”

Remus laughed. "I know what you mean Padfoot. I remember seeing the look on her face last year when the young Malfoy heir would give her grief. I remember seeing her kneeing him right between the legs so hard, I doubt there will be any future Malfoys."

Both of the Marauders laughed for the next several minutes.

"Anyway, is there anything important that I need to know of? Did Rose say anything that sounds important?"

Sirius snorted. "Besides the fact that she no longer feels welcome at Hogwarts, she knows about the first task has something to do with dragons. How she knows about that is beyond me. I didn't bother asking."

"Hmm..." Remus said in deep thought. "I don't think they would force the champions to fight a dragon. They are too inexperienced. So I'd say they would most likely have to retrieve something from the Dragon. Did you give her any advice?"

Sighing, Sirius shook his head. "I was about to until we heard a noise from her line of the floo, so I disengaged the floo network."

"Good thinking, I know I should scold you for doing this in the first place, but I want to know how Rose is doing too. Dumbledore doesn't give up much information about what is going on. He just tells me that Rose is doing 'Okay'." Remus snorted. "From what you just told me, she is doing anything but okay."

"I agree," Sirius said having a feeling that Dumbledore was hiding something important from them and it had something to do with Rose.

(((o)))

"Wormtail, is our spy here yet?" A cold, icy voice demanded.

Peter Pettigrew, former member of the Order of the Phoenix and traitor to the light side clumsily walked toward his master in fear. "N...no master," Peter whimpered. "He has yet to arrive, but he has forwarded us a letter ahead of time."

"What does it say?" Voldemort demanded, his baby like body quivering in agitation.

Peter whimpered.

Voldemort fought the urge to crawl out of his chair and strangle the fat bubbling idiot in front of him. If it wasn't for the fact that he couldn't hold a wand, he would be putting the little rat animagus under the cruciatus at this very moment. He hissed darkly and impatiently. "Quit your whimpering Wormtail and tell me what Crouch Junior has to say!"

"Yes... yes Master," Peter bumbled, trying to retrieve the letter Crouch Junior had sent him. He was lucky his Master was in his cursed form, if not, he knew he would no doubt be put under the Cruciatus curse for 'taking to long.' Oh, why did he ever return back to his master when he could have continued to stay in hiding, somewhere no one could find him, like in America?

While Wormtail was thinking of this, Voldemort had hissed to his pet snake, Nagini, who was hiding in the corner of the room. "*Wrap your coils around him my precious, you may be having an early meal if he does not hurry up and speak.*"

Peter was snapped out of his little daydream of fear when he saw his master's pet snake slowly approach him from the other side of the room. Like lightning, the snake wrapped her body around the bubbling rat animagus and began hissing menacingly.

"Hurry Wormtail," Voldemort hissed darkly. "I am becoming...impatient."

Eyes bulging in fear, Peter tried as best as he could to read the parchment in his hands as Nagini began to squeeze him slowly and painfully. "M... Master, it says here that 'he' has failed to inform Ms. Potter about the first task and," Peter could say no further as the Dark Lord began to hiss in parseltongue and Nagini began to squeeze at him harder.

Squealing in fear of being squeezed to death, the rat animagus was angry that Crouch junior had failed. The bastard had been smart

enough to not come at all and had instead sent the letter by mail saying that he could not leave as Dumbledore was using him to perform some tasks.

“Hurry and tell me the rest Peter!” Voldemort demanded. This time he sounded *very* impatient.

Gulping and fumbling with the parchment in his hands as Nagini licked his cheek with her tongue, Wormtail hurriedly spoke. “It... it says here... that... that he would have come to report to you personally, but... but he could not as the old fool is having him perform several tasks,” Wormtail whimpered, wanting the massive snake to loosen its grip.

Hearing the Dark Lord hissing again, Wormtail hastily spoke before his master could complete whatever he was saying to Nagini, bumbling over his words. “Master, Crouch... he has also reported that... that Ms. Potter has achieved a definite increase in her school work and her skills in Transfiguration, Charms, and Defense have... have all improved drastically. It... it also says...” Wormtail trailed off as his eyes widened in shock.

“What! What does it say?” Voldemort shouted in his baby like voice, causing the Rat Animagus to hurriedly finish. “Speak and I will spare you from being a meal for Nagini today.”

“I’m... I’m sorry Master,” Peter sobbed as the pain was quite unbearable as Nagini began to squeeze him so hard, his bones felt like they would shatter. “He says... he says that there is something... something that you must really know about. Rose Potter is currently dating some person named Harry Evans. From his descriptions, the young man looks like James Potter, but he has Lily Evans’ eyes.”

Voldemort narrowed his red eyes at this information. “What is this? Are you absolutely sure that is what Crouch wrote?” Voldemort demanded.

He received an affirmative nod in return as Nagini tightened her whole body so hard around the rat animagus that he could scarcely breathe. Ignoring his pathetic servants crying and sobbing, the Dark

Lord began to think. "Is there anything else written on the letter that young Crouch needs to tell me?" Voldemort hissed.

"Yes... yes sir," Wormtail said trying hard to catch his breath.

"You impudent fool, why have you not told me this sooner? If it wasn't for the fact that I need you to carry me around, I would have killed you right now Wormtail! Give me the letter!" Voldemort said angry that the bumbling idiot.

"*Release him,*" Voldemort grudgingly hissed, much to Wormtail's relief.

With the letter in his little baby hands, Voldemort narrowed his eyes at the information he received from his spy.

"Interesting... very interesting..."

Chapter 8

Rose began to breathe hard as the time of the first task approached. Sitting at the lonely side of the Gryffindor table, she ignored the excited chatter that surrounded her. In less than an hour, she would be facing off against a dragon, and possibly against death.

“Ms. Potter,” A stern voice spoke from behind her.

She didn’t hear it and continued to wander lost in her own thoughts. Rose was too busy focusing on the task at hand. This morning, she had woken up screaming in pain from a nightmare she had about Voldemort. The shriveled infant that was Voldemort was happy that the tournament was to begin. She briefly recalled him telling the man she now knew as Barty Crouch Jr. to make sure that Rose picked an ‘easy’ dragon for the task, and promised pain should he fail. Rose scoffed mentally; easy dragon. It took no less than twelve fully trained and qualified dragon wranglers to subdue the ‘weakest’ dragon, a common Welsh green. Still, Rose was inwardly relieved that she wouldn’t be facing off against that horrible ridgeback.

“Rose Potter,” The same speaker said again.

Again, Rose ignored them. She had more important things to do before the task, like figure out how she was going to get the egg. She knew she was going to summon the broom, mount it then try to...what exactly? Harry told her that since the dragon was female, and guarding a clutch of eggs, it wouldn’t exactly leave the next willingly. So what was she to do?

“Rose Lily Potter, are you listening?”

Yet again, Rose wasn’t paying attention, but she was fast becoming annoyed with the annoying buzz in her ear. She had just refocused on her task when she felt something land on her shoulder.

BANG!

In a flash, Rose had rolled out of her seat and reflexively cast a powerful white shield in front of her. She held her wand in a dueling stance she had observed Harry use in his fight against Voldemort.

Rose blinked in shock when she noticed that everyone in the great hall was staring at her. The fact that she was wearing dueling robes and was positioned in a dueling stance that left no openings, made Rose look like a witch that should not be trifled with.

Hurriedly putting her wand back in its holster, she turned to her head of house who was standing a few feet away from her and staring at her with wide, fearful eyes. She had recoiled as if burned when Rose reacted. Rose sighed in exasperation; just another person to stare then. Everyone stared at her when she had entered the great hall dressed in her battle robes, which had been a gift from Harry. He told her that they would protect her against the worst of the dragon's fire and claws, but to try and avoid them anyway.

"Is there something you need Professor?" Rose said emotionlessly, after regaining her composure.

McGonagall coughed and regained hers. "Err... yes," She said feeling slightly awkward talking to her student. After what happened yesterday, she thought long and hard about what Rose had said to her and she couldn't help but feel ashamed at herself and her fellow co-workers for not taking care of one of their students. "Potter, the champions need to come down onto the grounds now. You have to get ready for your first task."

Rose's features looked determined, mirroring her resolve. She straightened her robes as best as she could and followed McGonagall out of the castle.

While Rose left with the transfiguration teacher toward the grounds, she didn't notice a silently shocked headmaster who stared at her with disbelief. She didn't know that the dueling stance she used a few moments ago was an advanced stance that only expert duelers used. She was also unaware that two of the teachers at the staff table had recognized it and both made vows to ask her where she learned it.

Dumbledore and Flitwick...

(((o)))

Walking with the Deputy Headmistress down to the Hogwarts grounds was uncomfortable. After their yelling match yesterday, both student and teacher didn't feel like talking to each other much. The silence was very thick as the two approached the tent that was erected for the champions.

"Good luck Ms. Potter," McGonagall said quietly as she went the other way. She stopped and turned back toward her student. "And, I apologize for my outburst yesterday. Good luck." And with that, McGonagall left before Rose could get a word in edgewise.

Right as Rose was about to step inside the tent and McGonagall was a good safe distance away, she heard someone call her from a distance. "Potter!" A familiar growling voice shouted.

Rose flinched. She recognized that voice anywhere; Alastor Moody a.k.a. Crouch Junior. She had been avoiding him ever since Harry had told her he was a death eater in disguise. "Hello Professor," Rose said fighting the urge to pull out her wand.

"You know what you are going against here, Potter?" Moody asked, sounding and looking very agitated, like he wanted to tell her something important.

Rose nodded.

Not even asking how she knew, he just continued, saying, "And you know what to do?"

Rose grinned, showing too many teeth. "I do and I don't need any help Professor." She all but growled.

Moody nodded, "Just looking out for you kid, I owe your parents that much."

At the moment he said that, Rose almost pulled out her wand and cursed the death eater. How dare he even say that!

"Thank you Professor," Rose said faking a warm smile; again showing too many teeth. Making sure the Professor was a safe distance away from her and that he would not attack her from behind, she went inside the tent.

Rose sat with her back to the wall of the tent, facing the entrance. She tried her best not to flinch under the gazes of the other three champions, none of which believed that she did not put her name in the goblet. It wasn't long before Ludo Bagman, the head of the Department of Games and Sports entered the tent, nearly bouncing in his excitement. Rose didn't even look up as he explained to the champions about the task. She had heard it all from Harry and watched a replay of Harry's memory of the event. She had to admit; Harry was a damn good flyer.

"Ms. Potter?"

Rose looked up into the kindly, round face of Bagman. He was holding a writhing canvas sack open toward her. "It's your turn." He said.

She glanced around the tent and at the other competitors. Cedric looked pale but determined at his, a small Sweedish Short-snout with a number one around its neck. Fleur had turned an unhealthy shade of green that Rose was happy to note clashed horribly with her silvery hair. She had the Common Welsh Green with a three on its neck. Krum looked the most composed as he glared at the Chinese Fireball hissing and spitting in his hand. He got to go first.

Rose looked sullenly back at the bag, realizing that she got to face the worst of the lot. "Lucky me..." she muttered. "I get the Horntail."

"Pardon?" Bagman asked. Rose waved him off and reached in the bag, only to wince as the horrible little toy bit her. She grabbed it around its neck and pulled it out as it growled and roared squeakily. The dragon glowered at her and she glowered back. She hated it.

"Rose," A voice from off to her side said softly. Tearing her gaze away from the dragon model, Rose turned her attention to her former crush, Cedric Diggory.

“Yes?” Rose asked harshly. “Shouldn’t you be off to meet your Dragon? The whistle has already sounded you know.”

Cedric looked uncomfortable. “I wanted to tell you I’m sorry for how my house has been acting toward you. And, I didn’t mean to say all those mean things to you.”

Rose green eyes narrowed dangerously. Using a bit of the legillimency that she was still learning to use, Rose discovered that the reason why Cedric was apologizing was because he wanted to get in her pants by apologizing first, treat her kindly, and hopefully get her to become his girlfriend. It was no secret at Hogwarts that she had grown into a beautiful young woman.

“I know you don’t mean it Diggory, I know you are only apologizing so you can shag me. So get the hell out of my face.” She said darkly, her eyes glowing slightly.

Cedric blinked and then his eyes narrowed angrily toward the red head. Before he could even take a step forward, there was a blur of movement and he found The Girl Who Lived’s wand aimed between his legs.

“Take one step forward and I’ll make sure you’ll never be able to use that again.” Her voice was dangerously cold.

In the background, Victor Krum winced at the red head’s words and made a mental note to himself to avoid angering her. Actually, it was best he stayed away from the red head completely. Was it him or was the tent suddenly cold all of a sudden?

Fleur, who was standing a few meters away, couldn’t help but glare at Cedric behind his back. She hated guys like Cedric. At first, she had thought Cedric was a nice and kind guy, but she was seeing his true colors lately, she saw how the Hufflepuffs and Cedric was treating the little red head and she detested guys like him.

“Excuse me,” A huffing Wizard said entering the tent, “Cedric Diggory, they are...” The Wizard trailed off when he noticed The Girl Who Lived had a wand pointing at Cedric Diggory and at the most precious

part of the male body. He visibly winced when he noticed the wand was shooting sparks out threateningly.

“Coming...” Cedric said with a cracking voice. He took a step back and began walking out of the tent, while looking at the red head in obvious fear.

The wizard, who was sent to get Cedric, was also staring at the pretty young woman in fear as he followed Cedric Diggory out. Rose went back to glaring angrily at her dragon model.

Before Rose knew it, the first task was on its way. There was a scream and a thud, followed by Bagman’s loud voice calling for the healers. Rose glanced away from her model only to see a badly injured Cedric being hauled past the tent on a stretcher, moaning in pain. Rose didn’t like the guy, but she winced in sympathy.

Fleur Delacour, who was standing at the corner of the tent, trembled in fear when they all heard Cedric sobbing in pain in the background. She turned an even deeper shade of green and by the look on her face Rose could tell that Fleur was beginning to have second thoughts about participating in the Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Victor Krum, the usually silent and broody Quidditch player, was finally affected by the sound of Bagman yelling for healers to hurry up and rescue Cedric. Rose took notice that Krum looked paler than usual and he was no longer brooding.

Harry, who was watching the first task in the stands, offered to show her the match with by watching it through his eyes, but she had politely declined. It was bad enough to hear Cedric being tortured, but to see it... she didn’t fancy seeing that.

When Cedric’s sounds of pain finally died down, as well as the screams and gasps from the audience, they all heard Bagman speak again. “As you all may see, Mr. Cedric Diggory was unable to retrieve his egg. Though he tried bravely to retrieve it, he was unable to and yes... the judges are posting his marks now!”

Silence followed his comment.

“Not bad... not bad,” Bagman could be heard speaking again. “Oh, we just received word from the healers that young Cedric Diggory will be fine. Though he is in critical condition, he will most likely live through the injuries he suffered and will have enough time to re-cooperate so he can finish the rest of the tournament.

Fleur shivered and Krum swallowed audibly. Rose simply hoped she didn’t die.

“One down, three to go!” Bagman yelled as the whistle blew again. “Ms. Delacour, if you please!”

This time, morbid curiosity won out and she accepted Harry’s offer of seeing Fleur facing off against her dragon. Fleur didn’t lose her nerves and managed to stand her ground. She did some kind of complicated wand work that Rose had never seen before and had managed to shoot the spell directly into the dragon’s eyes.

For a moment the Dragon did nothing, but then it began to droop and finally it fell asleep. Cheering slightly, Fleur went to get her egg but the moment she managed to grab it, the dragon broke out of its trance and clipped her on the shoulder with its claws before she could get away to safety.

“What the hell? I thought Fleur managed to trance the dragon into a deep sleep?” Rose stuttered out in shock.

Harry mentally shook his head at her. **“You forget Rose; dragons have a high resistance to magic. Though most spells won’t work on a dragon, some powerful spells may actually work. However the duration of the effectiveness of the spell is quite short.”**

Rose nodded in understanding.

“Then again, she may have affected it because it’s the weakest.”

Sighing, Rose snapped back sarcastically. **“How lucky for me, I got the Hungarian Horntail. Meaning, he has the strongest magical resistance.”**

Harry shrugged. He had taught her plenty of spells that would most likely harm a dragon, but they would have most likely exhaust her if she even tried them. **“True, but just so you know, the Hungarian Horntail isn’t the strongest and most high resisted magic resistant creature. It’s a basilisk.”** Harry explained.

“Basilisk?” Rose responded back curiously, now watching Fleur receive her scores for completing her task. She managed to score a forty. Maxime had given her a ten, Crouch an eight, Dumbledore a nine, Bagman, a six, and Karkaroff a seven. The crowd immediately burst into applause at her score.

“We were lucky we had the Sword of Gryffindor to kill the thing in our second years,” Harry explained. **“I doubt even Dumbledore would have been able to kill it with spells.”**

Rose gulped, knowing just how lucky she had been. The only difference between her and Harry’s memories of the event in the chamber was the gender of the hero.

“And here comes Mr. Krum!” Bagman could be heard shouting, as the whistle sounded again. When Krum had left, both Harry and Rose went silent as they watched Krum handle his dragon.

Rose couldn’t help but wince and feel sorry for the Chinese Fireball when Krum zapped a spell right into the dragon’s eye. The Fireball went into a rage, stamping some of her eggs and shooting fire at nothing in particular. The Dragon was going on a rampage! With the dragon distracted, Krum immediately went off to get the golden egg. It wasn’t long before Krum managed to get away and they watched as he was scored.

Since most of the dragon’s eggs were broken, Krum didn’t get a full ten from any of the judges, but he managed to pull a respectable score anyway.

Rose found it odd that Karkaroff was being fair in the judging when it came to his own school and Fleur received a seven from him. She remembered seeing in Harry’s memories that Karkaroff was a real dirt bag. Victor Krum was given a forty, breaking even with Fleur. Though he may have been uninjured in his task, he had destroyed some

valuable and expensive dragon eggs. Maxime had given him an eight, Crouch an eight, Dumbledore a nine, Bagman a seven, and Karkaroff an eight.

“Harry, did you have something to do with Karkaroff playing fair?” Rose asked suspiciously, when something inside her told her that Harry definitely had something to do with it.

Rose could almost feel Harry acting blameless. **“Are you implying that I did something to one of the judges?”** He asked with mock outrage.

“Yes,” Rose said trying to glare at him through her mental mind link.

Harry shrugged. **“Well, that’s for me to know and you to find out then,”** Harry responded cheekily, as the whistle was heard signaling to Rose that it was her turn next.

“ ... ”

“Good luck, Rose,”

“And now for our final contestant and last champion; Ms. Rose Potter!” Bagman boomed over the stands.

Rose immediately erected her occlumency shields, protecting her mind against all the sound around her and focusing on the one thing that mattered; getting past her dragon. Stepping out of the tent and past the grove of trees, Rose was met with a huge crowd in the stands on one side of the field and the other, the full sized counterpart of her model. The Hungarian Horntail was glaring at her with huge dark evil yellow eyes, just like the small toy. But this one was real and much larger, and the teeth would do much more than cut her finger.

At that moment, Rose suddenly lost her concentration and she was left staring at the dragon in fear and shock. The dragon spread her massive leathery wings and screeched a challenge to the small human.

The audience murmur fearful for Rose, but she couldn't get her feet to move. Visions of her death kept replaying in her mind over and over. Suddenly the dragon reared its head back and blasted a gout of searing flame directly at her. She stood and stared fixatedly at the fire, unable to move.

"Rose!" Harry shouted in her mind.

Snapping herself out of her thoughts at Harry's voice, she managed to dive behind a rock as the fire just barely missed her. "*ACCIO FIREBOLT!*" Rose shouted as she tried to keep away from the dragons flame. From the memories she saw in Harry's pensieve, she knew had twenty seconds for the Firebolt to reach her and in that time, she would have to save herself from receiving a great deal of pain.

Whoosh!

Rose was caught out in the open with nothing to hide behind. With no other option, she swished her wand in a circle and used one of the spells Harry had taught her; a more powerful protego shield that Harry had created himself. "*Protego Invecus!*" Rose shouted, and immediately a glowing gold shield appeared in front of her, and the fire splashed off of the powerful charm. For a moment, everyone thought Rose was dead because the stream of fire had engulfed her and everything surrounding her for several meters.

She surprised all of them when the fire died down and standing before the dragon was an angry and unscratched Rose Potter with her wand raised before her, though she was a bit winded from casting such a powerful shield spell.

"*Lumos Solem!*" Rose shouted, and her wand released a powerful blinding white light, making the dragon and many others to look away. It was one of the most powerful light spells that she had ever cast and she knew it was probably one of the strongest that many in the audience had ever seen as well. Taking a moment to recover while the dragon was shaking the spots from its vision, she took note that the Firebolt Zero was approaching her at blinding speed out of the corner of her eye.

Taking advantage of the distraction from her blinding spell, she ran toward the broom and with a slight jump, she was on her broom and flying at break-neck speed. Inwardly, she was a bit relieved to be on a broom, she was a bit tired from running, using a shield charm and casting the most powerful light charm she could manage. She gained some distance up and away from the dragon to catch her breath and think about her next move.

Someone pointed up at her and the crowd went wild. Dumbledore and several of the more knowledgeable wizards which were present were looking on in shock that a fourth year managed to repel a dragon's breath attack with such an advanced, and unknown shielding spell. They were slightly surprised to see that a four year had the magic reserve capable of casting such a spell as well.

"Alright, diversionary tactics... let's go!" Rose said in her mind link with Harry.

Making sure that she had the dragon's attention, she began to circle the beast, trying to lure her from the eggs. She waited until the most opportune moment before diving down toward the next. The dragon opened its mouth and blasted a stream of fire at her as she neared. Reflexively she pulled out of the dive just in time. If she had pulled out any later, she would have been burnt to crisp.

"Merlin's beard, she can fly!" yelled Bagman as the crowd shrieked and gasped. "What kind of broom is that anyway? Its way faster then a standard Firebolt! Speaking of flying, are you watching this, Mr. Krum?"

Rose paid no attention to Bagman's commentary. She was busy trying to anger the dragon and get it chasing after her. After a few minutes of dodging a couple set of flames and doing lots of tricks in mid-air, which many would consider professional flying, Rose finally had enough. Stopping in mid-air, she pulled out her wand and held it aloft. She traced a ring above her and the air could be seen condensing and freezing. Once the circle was complete, she whipped her wand forward and aimed it at the dragon's head.

"Glacies Framaeo!" She screamed in her mind, using an ice spell that Harry had forbidden her to cast. She didn't even care about the

consequences of facing Harry's wrath, she was too busy trying to get past her dragon at the moment.

The ice above her reformed into a ten foot-long spear and rocketed toward the reptilian beast that was straining against its chain to reach Rose. The dragon tried to evade the ice but it still managed to tear through a wing membrane and slammed into its side, shattering into hundreds of shards; some of which managed to pierce its hide. The dragon fell heavily back to the ground roaring in pain but otherwise unharmed.

Rose was a bit disappointed and was momentarily winded from the drain of the spell. She remembered then why Harry had forbidden her from casting that particular spell. Once cast, the spell would drain what magic it needed from the caster, regardless of how much magic the caster had; meaning that she could have been killed by it. Realizing that she was lucky to still be conscious, Rose thanked the powers that be and looked down at the dragon. She almost felt sorry for the thing, but that was quickly quashed in favor of more fear.

The dragon was very mad now.

Unlike Krum's dragon which trampled and smashed its eggs in a rage, the Horntail was more protective of its clutch and much smarter than the Fireball. It began to flap its wings furiously, ignoring the wounds in its wing and side and hovered at the end of its chain. The frozen shards of ice that had managed to pierce its hide began to melt and evaporate at the dragon's body temperature soared with its temper. Rose gulped when she heard the chain begin to groan with the strain and realized that she had to make her move.

Once again, Dumbledore and several other knowledgeable wizards and witches present continued to watch in shock that a mere fourth year was powerful enough to cast a spell capable of injuring a full grown dragon. There weren't many mature wizards and witches capable of the feat they just witnessed. The people in the stands began to gasp and point when they realized that the dragon still intended to make a meal of the girl who lived.

Rose, however, kept her eyes on the prize, so to speak. As soon as she had the opportunity, she dived toward the nest, intent on

scooping up the golden egg and swooping to safety. She poured everything she had into the broom and as she neared the ground with the dragon hot on her tail, she could distinctively hear people shrieking and screaming in fear. The speed that she was diving was much faster than what Krum performed on his Firebolt at the Quidditch World Cup.

With an amazing display of flying skills, she managed to shift her weight and control the speed of her broom. Rose pulled herself out of the dive and snatched the egg at the same time, then immediately shot back up into the sky and away from the enraged dragon. She breathed a sigh of relief and suddenly noticed the crowd.

Everyone was screaming, cheering, and going crazy at how she had obtained her golden egg.

She could distinctly hear Bagman shouting through his sonorous spell, "That has got to be the fastest and most daring Wronski Feint I have ever seen! And I thought Victor Krum was the only person who could make the Wronski Feint look so death defying!"

Rose put some more distance between herself and the shrieking, fire breathing dragon and finally managed to relax. Touching down on the ground, she noticed how sweaty and how tight were gripping the broom.

"I can't believe it! Will you all look at that?" Bagman was yelling like a madman. "Our youngest champion is the quickest to get her egg and she is uninjured! Well, this is going to definitely shorten the odds on Ms. Potter and there is no doubt that she will be leading in the Tri-Wizard Tournament!"

Rose could only produce a weak smile as she faced her professors who were approaching her. While her Head of House looked deftly pale and stricken. Hagrid looked like he seen a ghost!

"Yeh did it! An'agains' the Hortail an' all, yeh flyin' was incredible Rose!"

Moody was looking incredibly pleased at the situation of her winning without a scratch on herself. His magical eye was dancing in its

socket. "Great job Potter, nice and easy does the trick," he growled out happily.

Rose just nodded to the professors who were beaming at her. She had absentmindedly banished the broomstick that Harry lent her away. It wouldn't do her any good if people started to ask her what kind of broom she had, nor would she be able to explain that it wouldn't be invented for another five years. She didn't notice the fact that she had done it wandlessly and wordlessly, but her professors did.

"That was an excellent show of flying, Ms. Potter. If you would like, you may go to the first aid tent. Madam Pomphrey has some strengthening and calming draughts if you need them." McGonagall offered.

The green eye girl shook her head in response. She was too busy in wanting to run up to Harry and about everything! "Sorry Professor, please excuse me," Rose said turning away from her teachers and walking toward the audience. She could distinctively make out Harry leaving the crowd in the stands and approaching her. Unable to control herself, she ran past a few Ministry wizards who were ordered to make sure none of the audience would interfere with the first task. When she reached Harry, Rose flung her arms around his neck and hugged him for all she was worth. "I did it! Did you see me? I got the egg and defeated the dragon!" She shrieked out loud excitedly.

Harry couldn't help but smile at the happiness that the red head was exuding as he wrapped his arms around the bubbly girl.

Neither of them noticed that the crowd was watching the two of them holding each other with abandon.

Dumbledore, who was sitting with the other judges, felt a bit impatient as he watched the scene from the judges booth. He desperately wanted to get up and go meet this young man, but as a judge, he was forced to sit there and wait.

"Calm down Rose, I think they are going to call out your score." Harry said.

Rose wasn't listening to a word he was saying. She was just so happy that she had completed the first task that she kissed Harry hard and right on the lips, much to the annoyance of the girls who had their eyes on Harry when he was in the stands. When she finally broke the kiss, she blushed prettily and looked quite flustered.

Harry simply smirked. "Did you enjoy that my little flower?" Harry teased.

Rose blushed harder and hid her face in his jacket. "Come on," She mumbled. "Let's go see what my score is." She said grabbing hold of his hand and pulling him with her.

Harry however, did not hear her. It was mainly because the crowd was still screaming and cheering Rose Potter's victory over the dragon. Though, the noise level did lower a bit because people were staring at Rose kissing a handsome messy haired teenager with mixed expressions.

As for the judges, seeing that Rose was giving them her attention, they immediately began to score her.

The Headmistress of Beauxbatons shot out a ribbon which showed a nine. The crowd burst into applause with this. Next, Barty Crouch released a ten in the air, making the crowd go wild. "Hmm..." Harry mumbled, seeing how fair things were. While Rose was getting scored fairly, Harry hadn't been so lucky in his dimension.

Dumbledore released a ten in the air like Crouch, causing the whole crowd to go wilder then before. "I bet you thirty galleons that Bagman is going to give me a ten," Rose said excitedly.

Harry rolled his eyes. "I'm not taking a fixed bet," He replied back while Bagman had released a ten as well, causing everyone to go crazy. The last judge, Karkaroff, didn't even hesitate. He shot out a ten as well. The total score for Rose Potter: 49/50. It was like a bomb went off; everyone was standing and screaming their heads off.

"I know you did something to Karkaroff Harry," Rose said turning her gaze to Harry, who just blushed in reply.

“Like I said; me to know, you to find out,” Harry teased, as he began walking away.

Rose immediately caught up to him. “Where are you going?” She said, feeling a little put out that he was leaving so quickly. She had hoped he would want to spend some time with her.

“I need to get out of her before Dumbledore gets a hold of me,” Harry whispered as he nudged her to look over her shoulder.

Looking over her shoulder, Rose noticed that Dumbledore was walking straight toward them. “Then you’d better go Harry. I don’t want Dumbledore to get any more suspicious. He has the tendency to know something with or without legillimency.”

Harry nodded. Without a single sound, Harry apparated away, not even realizing he had just apparated on Hogwarts’ grounds, where the legendary apparation wards were in place.

Dumbledore had immediately stopped walking when he saw ‘Rose’ boyfriend disappear. He was simply gobsmacked. What he just saw was simply the impossible. Not even Voldemort or himself could even attempt such a feat! Changing his mind, the old man turned away and began heading back to the castle deep in thought.

Rose, who was confused at why the Headmaster had turned around, was about to head back to the castle also, but was stopped when a familiar red head came up to her.

“That was brilliant Rose! You’re first place!” Charlie Weasley said approaching her. He didn’t know anything about his little brother and baby sister getting into a fight with Rose.

“Thanks, Charlie,” Rose said smiling slightly.

“Wow, you’ve grown!” Charlie said just realizing that the red head had indeed grown. “Man, if I was any younger...” Charlie trailed off as he looked at Rose up and down.

Rose blushed slightly under his scrutiny.

“Oh don’t worry. I know you have a boyfriend. Saw you kissing him a while ago. I don’t want to get pounded for messing with you. No doubt my mum would kill me too if she found out that I was trying to hit on you.” Charlie said lightly, putting her at ease. “Listen, I’ve got to go and send Mum and owl, I swore I’d tell her what happened... but yeah, that was unbelievable, Rose. If you can, can you try and tell me what kind of shielding charm you used a while ago on the Hungarian Horntail? I’ve never heard or seen a spell such as that and it would be pretty useful with the people I work with. I heard from Ron that you have talent in quidditch, but I didn’t think you were *that* good. Sorry, I got to go now. Bagman wants a word with you and the champions. Make sure you stay around okay?” Charlie said starting to leave, but then he paused halfway.

“By the way, where are Ron and Ginny?” He said in a confused voice. “I figured they would be the first to congratulate you.” A glower settled over Rose’s face, and Charley realized that something was wrong. Seeing that she didn’t want to say anything, he began running away, but not without waving her goodbye.

As she began walking to the first aid tent, where the other champions were located, Rose began to get slightly depressed. Even though she should be happy that she had managed to pass the first task, she really did miss her friends. She remembered hearing from Harry that after his first task, he was reunited with his friends, but by the looks of things here, it didn’t look like she would be friends with them again anytime soon.

“Hello Ms. Potter! That was excellent flying you demonstrated back there!” Bagman interrupted her thoughts with a cheery wave.

Rose flinched slightly at the scene before her. She really did need to stop day dreaming, it could be the death of her. “Hello,” Rose said quietly when she saw Fleur, Cedric, and Krum.

Cedric was looking worse for wear. If she didn’t hate him so much, she would have actually felt sorry for him. He was wrapped up in a bunch of white bandages and both his legs and arms were in casts. Cedric seemed to be in a world of pain and he didn’t look like he wanted to be here.

Fleur on the other hand, had a bandage on her shoulder which had been clipped and was still healing.

Krum was slouching at the corner side of the tent and looked to be brooding again. Every one of the champions was holding a golden egg. It seemed that they gave Cedric his as a consolation prize of sorts.

“Well done, *all* of you!” said Ludo Bagman. “Now just a few quick words and then you can go back to the castle. You’ve got a nice long break before the second task, which will take place half past nine on the morning of February the twenty-fourth, but we’re giving you something to think about in the meantime! If you look down at those golden eggs you’re all holding, you will see that they open... see the hinges there? No, don’t open them now. It’s unpleasant,” Bagman said stopping Cedric from opening his egg. “Now, you all need to solve the clue inside of the egg, because it will tell you what the second task is, and then you can prepare for it! Are there any questions? No? Good, off you go, then!”

While Madam Pomphrey had to help Cedric outside, both Fleur and Krum left on their own.

Rose wasted no time in leaving as well, but before she could take a step outside, Bagman stopped her. “Rose, may I speak to you please?”

The red head sighed. She knew what the former Quidditch Player wanted to talk to her about. Thanks to Harry, she knew that Bagman had a gambling problem and that he was betting on her to win the Tri-Wizard Tournament. “I’m sorry Mr. Bagman, but I’m in a hurry,” Rose said as she turned around to leave, but was stopped when Bagman put a hand on her shoulder.

“If you want to find an easy way to figure out what your egg says, I suggest you bring your egg with you to the bathroom and open it in water.” Seeing Rose’s confused look, he quickly explained. “I’m not sure you know, but the other schools are cheating. It’s only fair that you should know as well.”

“What about Cedric?” Rose questioned the man with eyes of disbelief.
“Did you tell him this?”

“I already have,” Bagman said lying smoothly. “I told him earlier when he entered the tent first.”

“I see,” Rose said, knowing full well that Bagman was lying.

“Good luck with the second task Ms. Potter. You are already in the lead and you wouldn’t want to disappoint anyone if you suddenly lost it.”

Rose tried to say something to the retired quidditch player, but he quickly left the tent, not even turning around when she called for him.

She sighed. “I guess I better get back to the castle.”

Chapter 9

Rose slumped in the tatty, yet comfortable armchair that Hagrid had offered her.

For the past several days at Hogwarts, Rose had been uncertain about how she felt toward her fellow classmates. The moment she had returned to the castle after the first task, her classmates everywhere were hailing her like they had Cedric when he had been chosen as champion. The hostility everyone had been showing her vanished, with the exception of the Slytherins. Even Hermione, Ron, and Ginny seemed to warm up to her, but she had continued to ignore them.

Why you may ask?

Stubborn like her mother or so McGonagall had told her before. She felt it was her right for them to apologize to her first, before they even attempted to try a friendly conversation with her.

So she waited for a few days, hoping her ex-friends would come up to her and apologize after the first task, but they did not. Hermione did however, walk by her after transfiguration class and congratulated her on her victory, but nothing else was said.

Oddly enough, Rose didn't really care. She knew that should she make up with Hermione, Ginny and Ron, her old friends, she would have to eventually tell them about Harry Evans; her supposed boyfriend. No doubt they had been really curious as to late on whom this Harry Evans was and why she had never even mentioned him when she was spending time at the Burrow.

In retrospect, she thought, Fate was being rather fair to her right now. In the past, she had been dealt a bad hand but it looked like things were balancing out a bit. While she was still friendless and had no one at Hogwarts to talk to, she still had Harry, someone with whom she could share her feelings and someone who she knew she had feelings for.

In her mind, it was kind of a bit of a trade off.

While losing her friends, she had gained someone who she could trust with all of her heart, someone who she could depend on, and someone who had actually been in her shoes and knows how complicated her life was. The only thing she could not trust Harry with, was her true feelings for him. She was unsure if Harry would return her feelings, or if Harry felt that she was too young for him.

While Harry was mentally twenty two years old, but physically eighteen, Rose was a fourteen year old girl; someone who was still coming into her own, so to speak. Thanks to the potions that Harry had given her, she was a little more developed than those her age, as if she were possibly fifteen or sixteen already.

Shaking herself out of her thoughts about her growing figure and her love interest, Rose began to think about the other things that have been running around her life.

Cedric seemed to not only resent her for not accepting his apology after the first task, but for threatening to remove his special manly parts. Not only did he lose a lot of respect and face at Hogwarts when he failed to achieve his task, he was humiliated by the fact that the green eye girl who was a fourth year, had completed the task and was currently first place in the Tri-Wizard Tournament to boot. The looks he gave her these days were a mixture of anger and disgust. Sometimes they were even predatory, but Rose didn't quite care what Cedric held against her nowadays. She was too busy trying to sort out her feelings toward her classmates.

At one point, she was relieved and happy that all of her fellow classmates no longer showed hostility and distrust toward her, but at the same time she was angry at how quickly they had changed after the first task. That was when she started to believe that no one around her had never really treated her like a real friend. They all seemed to just want to get buddy-buddy with her because they either wanted to shag her or be friends with 'Rose Potter, The Girl Who Lived'.

She sighed again for the hundredth time that day.

"Thinkin' hard, Rosie?" Hagrid asked offering her a cup of tea in one of his bucket sized tea cups.

Rose nodded. Normally, she would bring this to Harry, but Harry was currently off to destroy the second to last horcrux, the diadem of Rowena Ravenclaw. He wouldn't really destroy the artifact, just the soul fragment of Voldemort inside of it.

"I'm confused Hagrid," she said softly. "I'm not sure who to trust anymore. The way all my classmates just changed their opinion on me instantly, really ticks me off. At once point, they're all calling me a show-off and a liar, the next, they are treating me like a queen. It's so frustrating." The red head said nearly in tears. She didn't bother to mention to Hagrid about how many of the Ravenclaws were begging her to teach them the spells she had used against the dragon. The shield she cast didn't technically exist, and the Ice Lance had been forgotten and forbidden thousands of years ago. Harry had discovered it while he was traveling through Cambodia and kept it a closely guarded secret...till he taught Rose. She was a bit confused, though, why Harry had not scolded her yet for casting spells that he had forbidden her to.

The huge half giant that was sitting across the table from the red head could only smile at her sadly. He knew perfectly what Rose meant since could remember the year he was framed for opening the Chamber of Secrets and many people who he called friends abandoned him. "I really don' know wha' ta say, Rosie. Th' only thing I can really tell yeh, is tha' I'm impressed an prou' to hear tha' you haven' broke down yet from th stress. I'm sure yer parents would have been prou' to see how strong yeh are. I heard abou' yer yellin' match with McGonagall and let me tell yeh, yeh left her right horrified and shocked fer hours on end after yer words."

Rose cringed at the memory of herself telling McGonagall off about how unfair she and the Hogwarts teachers were being. She had lost Gryffindor a hundred points and a recieved few detentions with Filch for her disrespect. Curse Filch and that trophy room anyway. How the hell does it get so dirty every few days and why did it have something to do with Fred and George Weasley?

"Anyhow, what's this abou' a boyfriend I hear? I remember seeing 'im in Hogsmeade with yeh."

Again, Rose winced. Lately, everyone seemed to be asking her about Harry. First it was her former friends, then her housemates who seemed crazy about him, then the girls from the other houses, and now Hagrid. Though she was sure Hagrid didn't have any kind of a crush...she hoped. Though Rose didn't voice it or didn't risk using legillimency, she had an awful feeling that Dumbledore had put Hagrid up to questioning her. Lately, she had noticed that all the portraits in the castle seemed extra attentive toward her and there was always teacher or a prefect nearby, as if waiting to catch her in the middle of a scheme.

"His name is Harry Evans and yes, he's really my boyfriend." Rose said simply. It would be best to go along with the existing story for now. She and Harry could sort things out later.

Hagrid chuckled. "No kiddin', I saw you kissin' 'im on the lips after the firs' task. If I hadn' seen it myself, I'd say yer fellow classmates are quite jealous of yeh."

Rose giggled at how true that was. The kiss she had given Harry absentmindedly at the first task told everyone that he was hands off and taken off the market. "Yeah, Parvati and Lavender have been bugging me daily about him. It's not just them either. It's the older sixth and seventh years, too. They're all asking me how I was able to catch such a handsome person."

Hagrid didn't look like he wanted to talk about boys and handsome teenagers, but he had a determined look on his face, as if he were doing someone a difficult favor. Lord knows Hagrid would do anything for Dumbledore. "Speaking of that, how did you meet him and how old is he?"

Rose cocked her head to the side, her suspicions confirmed. Time to pop the balloon. "Did Dumbledore ask you to ask me this Hagrid?" She said innocently and if she had to admit out loud, a bit too bluntly.

Hagrid began to visibly sweat. "Err...course not," He said not doing a good job lying. "I was jus'...curious."

Rose raised an eyebrow suspiciously. Hagrid had actually managed to lie to her straight in the face and looking her in the eye. She wasn't

the only person who had been training lately. Time to lay it on thick. She thought for a second, recalling the story Harry had given her to tell people who were a bit too insistent. Now that Rose thought about it, she was sure that Harry knew this was coming.

“Well, Harry’s a good old childhood friend of mine back from Surrey. He’s seventeen-years-old, and he was home schooled. I doubt the Ministry has any records about him. I forgot his place of birth, I remember he told me once, but I forgot. Anyway, he and his family never stayed anywhere for long. Harry was raised in many places, including Surrey when I met him.” The red head said, lying so perfectly that she understood why the Sorting hat wanted to put her in Slytherin.

“How did yeh meet ‘im?” Hagrid said anxiously. Relief was written all over his face.

Rose inwardly rolled her eyes at how discreet Hagrid was when it came to gathering information. “When we were kids,” She said smiling slightly. “When I was getting picked on by my cousin and a bunch of her friends, Harry came and rescued me. That’s all you need to know Hagrid.” She said looking sharply at Hagrid as if to say, ‘don’t ask anything else’.

“But... how did you two wind up boyfrien’ and girlfrien’?” He said testing the red head.

Rose’s eyebrows rose sharply at the bravery that Hagrid was showing. Time for more story.

“I’ve always had a crush on Harry since we were kids, because to me, he was my knight and shining armor,” Rose said glad that Harry wasn’t in listening range. It would be so embarrassing if he heard her now! “Before I went to the Weasleys this past summer, I met up with Harry again and we discovered we were both magical. And let me tell you, he was quite surprised that I was The Girl Who Lived, he had always thought my name was Rose Dursley.” She said shivering for effect.

Rose hated to lie to the half giant, but Harry had insisted that should anyone ask about him, she was to use any story she deemed good.

She made sure to run it by Harry to make sure there were no holes that anyone could pick up on, and she and Harry had agreed on a childhood friend tale.

“Before we knew it, we were going on a few dates and things went on from there,” said Rose hoping that Hagrid wouldn’t ask her more questions.

She wasn’t exactly surprised when Hagrid questioned her again.

“Why didn’ you tell Hermione and Ginny any o’ this? I heard from a few of yer classmates tha’ not even Hermione and Ginny knew that you were datin’ with this Harry feller.”

Rose shrugged, a bit suspicious as to how this conversation was going.

“I was going to tell them, but the Quidditch World Cup and the Tri-Wizard Tournament popped up. When I became Champion, it just slipped my mind,” She said lamely. Luckily for her, Hagrid fell for it.

“Anyhow, I’ve got to go now *Professor* Hagrid,” teased Rose. “It’s been nice talking to you again.”

Hagrid patted her shoulder fondly, and nearly bowled her over. “It’s good ter know tha’ yer still visitin’ me. Hermione, Ginny, and Ron haven’ visited me since you were all together as friends. I only see ‘em durin’ lessons now.”

Rose couldn’t exactly blame them. Hagrid had just introduced them to the Blasted Ended Skrewts and she didn’t fancy getting near them during Care of Magical Creatures. Also, she didn’t mention, the only reason she came down to visit Hagrid, was because of Hermione starting her campaign for house elf freedom and she did not want to be asked to join. She mentally thanked her possible future boyfriend for the heads up.

“Later, Hagrid,” Bidding her first friend in the Magical World goodbye, she went straight back toward the Hogwarts castle.

On the way to the Gryffindor Tower, Rose bumped into her former friends who seemed excited about something. When the three of them saw her, they froze in mid-step and stared at her. Seeing her former friends cease walking and staring at her, Rose stopped walking as well.

"Hi Rose," The first person to speak was Hermione.

Rose nodded her head in greeting. "Hello Hermione," She replied back politely.

"How's it going?" A hesitant Ginny asked.

Rose shrugged. She was wondering what Hermione, Ron, and Ginny were doing hanging together. Last she heard, they had gotten into a huge row about something and they weren't talking to each other. "Not bad, just came back from visiting Hagrid. I haven't been able to talk to him in a while what with the tournament around the corner."

She noticed briefly that all three of her former friends looked guilty at the mention of the half giant. Most likely, they felt bad for not visiting him in a while. "Anyhow, I've got to go now, later," Rose said turning her back to them and walking off before they could say another word. She didn't notice the forlorn look on Hermione's face, but she did notice the look on Ron's. When she rounded the corner away from the eyes of her ex-friends, Rose shivered in disgust. Ron had been leering at her the way he looked at Fleur Delacour these days.

Ever since she had finished taking those health modification potions and started exercising, she started to attract a lot of attention from the opposite sex. Though she tried her best to not wear anything too revealing, short, or tight, they were still staring at her like a band of hungry wolves. She hated the way guys looked like her. As much as Parvati and Lavender may like guys ogling them, she really wasn't that type of girl.

"The only person I want to stare at me is Harry." The she said with a slight flush to her cheeks. She didn't mind if Harry looked at her like that.

“Excalibur,” said the red head, when she reached the portrait of the Fat Lady. Entering the Gryffindor Common room, Rose was about to go up to the girl’s dormitory, but one of the Gryffindor prefects stopped her.

“Rose, the Headmaster wishes to see you. The password is pumpkin pasty,” The female prefect said seriously.

With a sigh, Rose turned around and headed back out of the Gryffindor common room. On the way out of the portrait, she saw her former friends again approaching. They were chatting amongst each other, and didn’t even notice that she was walking toward them.

“I’m telling you Hermione, the House-Elves don’t want their freedom! They’re happy as they are. Why do you insist that they need to be free?” Ginny said heatedly to the bushy haired girl.

Speaking of house elves, Harry had asked her if she would ask Dobby if he wanted to work for him. Dobby had accepted when she informed him that he would also be serving her; The Great Girl Who Lived and the one who had freed him. However, in return for doing that, Dobby had requested her if they could take Winky as well. So now, both elves had proclaimed her as their mistress and Harry as their master.

It was quite a shock for the little elf when he found out who Harry really was. He had fainted right away and the thought of it still sent Rose into a fit of giggles.

“How can you and Ron be so cold? They’re being treated like slaves Ginny! Do you understand? I can’t believe Dumbledore would keep slaves at Hogwarts!” Hermione snapped, glaring at Ron who was no longer paying attention to her.

“Hi Rose,” Ron said no longer paying attention to Hermione, instead staring at the red head. He began to ogle her, much to Hermione’s disgust.

Rose inclined her head in greeting and continued to walk right past them. Taking a turn, the last thing she heard before she headed up the stairway, was Hermione talking in a sad voice.

“She’s so distant nowadays.”

(((o)))

Rose opened the door to Dumbledore’s office and strode in before being invited. She held no respect for the man anymore, and didn’t feel like he deserved it anyway. She plopped down heavily in one of the cushy chairs in front of Dumbledore’s desk and looked up at him with impatience.

“Greetings Ms. Potter, how are you this fine evening?” Dumbledore said in greeting. If he was offended by Rose’s rude entry, he didn’t show it.

Rose shrugged nonchalantly in response. “I was doing fine until you called me to your office,” she snapped, not bothering to hide her hostility toward the old man.

Dumbledore didn’t as much as flinch at her words. Though Dumbledore did not reprimand her, the portraits in the office shook their heads in disbelief and began to mutter amongst themselves.

“Would you like a lemon drop Rose?” asked Dumbledore.

“No sir,” She said curtly. “Can we get to why I was called here? Please, no mind games. I’m a busy girl and I’m really not in the mood for trick questions.”

Again, Dumbledore showed no change in his emotion other than the twinkles in his eyes dimming slightly. “Rose-” Dumbledore started, but she interrupted him.

“Call me Ms. Potter sir, only my friends can call me by my first name.”

“Very well Ms. Potter,” Dumbledore said, the twinkles in his eyes disappearing completely. “I wanted to question you on your attitude lately. Why have you shown such hostility towards me and your fellow teachers?”

Rose narrowed her dangerously. "That's really none of your business, *sir*," She said icily. "We are here for school related subjects, aren't we?"

"On the contrary Rose," Dumbledore began, but Rose interrupted him again.

"Ms. Potter," The red head corrected.

"My apologies Ms. Potter," Dumbledore said looking a bit uncertain. "Ms. Potter, what I mean to say is; it really is my business as it is related to school. You showed us all a powerful display of magical ability during the first task, you have been showing hostility against your teachers as of late, you've seemed to snap at your friends a lot, and if I may say so myself, I am curious as to what is going on with you Rose. I am only trying to look out for you."

Rose's eye began to twitch at how the headmaster seemed to be forgetting to call her Ms. Potter on purpose. She knew he was trying to get her angry so she would make a mistake and something she had been keeping secret. "First off Headmaster, I said it before, I will say it again. It's Ms. Potter and you may not call me Rose. Only my friends are allowed to call me by my first name, and there really aren't a lot of people on my friend list right now." Rose's voice was monotone and her face an emotionless mask as she invoked her occlumency training. "As to what I did during the first task; I recall you telling me that I would become more powerful as I grew up. Were you lying to me, Headmaster?"

"No Rose, I did not mean it like that. What I meant was..."

"Again," Rose interrupted calmly. Harry's cold personality had really been rubbing off on her as of late. "It's Ms. Potter. And to address your second point, the reason I am showing 'slight' hostility against my mentors is because they are being unfair and they allowed other students to tease me and insult me."

"I apologize, but your teachers..."

"Are not doing their jobs," Rose said finishing his sentence for him.

Dumbledore had begun to get annoyed. One of his most important and favorite students was interrupting was showing him no respect. If only he could use legillimency, he could quickly find the answers he was looking for.

"About me snapping at my friends, I *have* no friends. I began to realize that no one really did care about me, instead they only wanted to buddy up with the girl who lived."

"That's not true Ms. Potter," Dumbledore said hastily interrupting her. "Plenty of people care about you. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley care about you very much as you are a daughter to them. Though you may not know it, your former friends miss you and they really do care about you deeply."

"Friends, Headmaster," hissed Rose angrily. "Don't betray their friends or their trust. I am beginning to realize that the wizarding world is really not worth it. Yes, learning and studying about magic is fun, but having to put up with people whispering and pointing at you behind your back can get frustrating. How am I supposed to enjoy my childhood when I have to put up with dangers every year at Hogwarts, relatives who *hate* me, and people who I cannot even trust?"

Dumbledore was speechless. Rose Potter had a big point. Before he could even say anything, Rose spoke again. "I'm leaving your office Professor, whether you are dismissing me or not. You are my teacher, not my guardian. You have no right whatsoever to demand answers out of me. So stay out of my life," Rose said turning to leave.

Before she could even touch the door handle, Dumbledore spoke, but this time, he didn't speak in his kind or calm voice, but in a slight angry voice. "You will sit down Ms. Potter, we are not talking yet."

Rose shivered slightly at the anger in Dumbledore's voice, but she didn't want to show any weakness. "I Rose Lily Potter, the last descendant and true Heir of the Gryffindor line... Command's you to open this door!" Immediately the door opened for her.

Dumbledore was gobsmacked. He had his suspicions that the Potter line was descended from the Gryffindor line, but had no proof until Rose had pulled the sword from the sorting hat two years ago. Even

then, the full proof was before him now. Only the Headmaster and a descendant of a founder could command the castle. Still, he had an obligation and said obligation was leaving his office now. "Twenty points from Gryffindor. Ms. Potter, sit down. I will not repeat myself!" He thundered out, not knowing why he was losing control. He had yet to talk about the mysterious Harry Evans that had appeared in the girl's life.

Rose turned around with a dark look on her face. "Our conversation is over Headmaster. You are asking questions that aren't any of your business. I will be taking my family heirloom by the way." She said. She flicked her wand at the glass cabinet encasing the sword of Gryffindor. The glass vanished and the sword floated serenely into Rose's outstretched hand. "By the way; taking twenty points away from me like that? It just proves my point about how unfairly you command and control this school."

"I... I..." Dumbledore was truly speechless for the first time.

"Have a good evening, Headmaster," said Rose, turning and leaving with the Sword of Gryffindor hid in her robes.

"You are walking a dangerous path like Tom Riddle, Rose," Dumbledore said in a last ditch effort to keep the girl in his office. Rose halted just outside the door. Not even turning around, Rose spoke in a dangerous voice that sent shivers down Dumbledore's spine.

"I told you before Headmaster, it's Ms. Potter. As for the path I'm walking on, it's the path that I chose, not you. Didn't you say it is the path we choose which makes us who we are? You seem to be forgetting that. You allowed Tom Riddle to walk the path of darkness and you are just repeating the same mistake over by leaving me at a place I hated like him, keeping secrets from me, and claiming that I am too young to know things. You made the mistake of turning Tom Riddle into Voldemort, not himself. You could have stopped him from turning dark, but foolishly believed in some belief that he would one day repent for his crimes."

Taking a small breath, Rose spoke again, this time, her voice was so cold, the temperature in the room began to get colder and Fawkes released a small pitiful trill.

"I will *never* walked the path that Tom Riddle went down and don't you dare think you are doing what is best for me for my parents sake," She said, whirling around to face the old man. Her face was furious and her eyes were full of tears. "I know that Snape was the one who lead my parents to their deaths and you hired him to be a Potions master, believing that he had truly repented! You kept that a secret from me and you are a god damned fool for doing it! I know the future, and I know he will kill you! So don't lecture me about things you don't fucking even understand you old bastard! You were equally responsible for my parent's death and hiding their *true* will from everyone! My parents never did want me sent to the Dursleys, but you sent me there anyway! So don't you *dare* go telling me I'm walking the same path as that bastard Voldemort when you are the reason why he walked that path in the **first place!**" She screamed at him.

Without another word, she ran out the Headmaster's office in tears, leaving a shocked and shaken Dumbledore behind.

"How could she had known that I... no... what did she mean by she knew the future?" Dumbledore said to himself hoarsely. Though he wouldn't have admitted it, Rose Potter's words hurt him deeply.

"Headmaster," The portrait of Godric Gryffindor, who hadn't spoke in a decade, said. "If what my descendant saying is true about you hiding my great grandchildren's will, you had better leave her alone or I will make *sure* you will not have much authority in Hogwarts then you are supposed to have."

The other three founders, who were portrait next to him, nodded in agreement. Salazar Slytherin, who was known to not speak in possibly three decades, spoke in a cold, dark voice. "You are playing a dangerous game Albus Dumbledore. The girl is well informed and she knows the truth. It is best if you start telling her whole truths and no longer half truths if you want to keep her trust and prevent her from walking a dark path like Tom Riddle. She may not be my blood

heir, but she is my last *true* living magical heir. I will make your life a living hell if you try to interfere with hers.”

Dumbledore said nothing but sat down on his seat exhaustedly. What Rose Potter had said to him disturbed him greatly, especially her comment about how she saw his future and seeing him die in the hands of Severus Snape. The fact that the child *knew* that his Potions Master was the reason why the child lost her parents, made his heart ache. No one was supposed to know that Severus Snape was the reason why the Potters were targets and the person who heard half the prophecy, except for him and Severus Snape.

When he had taken Severus in as his Potions Master, he had truly believed that the man had repented, but seeing and hearing Rose Potter call him a fool for believing and trusting the former death eater, stricken his heart. Did Rose know what the prophecy said and how did she know that Snape was indirectly responsible for the death of James and Lily Potter?

The looks that the Founders and the past Headmasters and Mistresses were giving him suddenly made him feel slightly unwelcome in his very own office.

And underneath it all, Albus knew that this Harry Evans had everything to do with the changes in young Rose Potter.

(((o)))

Rose slammed the door to the Room of Requirement hard and required a comfy couch. She flopped down heavily on it and Rose began to curse herself for losing her cool. How could she have been so dumb to tell Dumbledore about the things that she wasn't even supposed to know about?

The only people who were supposed to know that Severus Snape was the *real* reason why she had no parents were Snape and Dumbledore. She had almost jeopardized her and Harry's mission in defeating Voldemort because she couldn't control her emotions.

“I wish Harry was in Britain. I can't seem to concentrate without being able to talk to him.” Rose lamented to herself, not caring that

sometimes she couldn't think straight when Harry was near her anyway.

While Harry was in Germany, in search for the diadem of Ravenclaw, she was unable to contact him because the distance was so far that she would have depleted her magic should she try using her mind link. Once he destroyed the piece of Voldemort's soul in the diadem of Ravenclaw, he would then move on to the ring of Gaunt that Harry had discovered that Dumbledore had yet to even know about. By all appearances, that meant he would be gone for a few days and Rose was left alone and unwilling to talk to anyone else for that period of time.

Rose sighed heavily and forlornly. "I miss him," She said wanting her heart to stop thumping in pain. If it hadn't been Harry, she would have long since broken down and gone insane during the weeks after she had been chosen as champion.

She curled on the soft cushion and wished she had a cup of cocoa, and a small end table appeared with a steaming mug of hot chocolate. Rose took a grateful sip from the mug. "Thank you," Rose said to the room. She could almost feel the castle welcoming her.

Strange...Shrugging it off, she asked the Room of Requirement to provide her some reading material, namely the Witch Weekly magazine. The current issue appeared on the end table and Rose picked it up. What she saw on the front cover made her nearly spill her drink.

There was a picture of her looking scrawny and weak a few months ago, trying to hide in her voluminous robes, and a picture of her from now, looking extremely healthy and sexy at the Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Rose Lily Potter: Just how does she do it?

By: Lilith Cervantes

Rose Lily Potter, 14-year-old, The Girl Who Lived has grown into a beautiful young woman! Not wanting to sound mean or cruel, but the

mysterious fourth champion of the Tri-Wizard is no longer considered small and puny!

Though we are not sure how young Rose Potter has grown from a scrawny little girl into a beautiful normal 14-year-old girl, we are amazed at the changes.

Just how did she do it?

Many of us girls working at Witch Weekly are dying to know her secret!

Parvati Patil, a pretty 14-year-old girl and roommate of The Girl Who Lived quoted: "I don't know how she did it and she won't share it with us. Not wanting to badmouth my roommate or anything, but at the beginning of the year, she really didn't look all that at first, but after she was chosen as champion, she grew up and her curves seemed to grow up at such a pace, I'm jealous."

Just how does Rose Potter do it? How could she have developed her body so fast and make it look so luscious, without making her face look old?

Another Hogwarts student, who shall remain nameless says, "Though I hate to admit it, I'm jealous of her pretty figure. She didn't even look like that at the beginning of year. She looked like skin and bone! I think she's using some illegal potions or possibly dark magic."

But there are no potions or normal cosmetic spells that can change one as much as Rose Potter has changed. Many of our top researchers claim that performing such a spell or using a potion is impossible without increasing one's entire physical appearance.

Another nameless student tells us they have seen young Ms. Potter wake up every morning and run laps around the lake to stay in shape.

*One of our researchers claims that it is **possible** that young Ms. Potter is taking some kind of advanced nutrient potion, and by working out, her body is developing with the potion to give her a pretty figure.*

Is that even possible? Can someone's body have really changed from a child's body into a desirable body in just a few months?

Stay tuned loyal readers. We will solve this mystery as quickly as possible. Maybe even have an interview with Ms. Potter herself.

For the second time that day, Rose lost her temper. She knew exactly who had taken the photos of her. "Ooh, when I see Colin Creevey again, I'm going to hex him from here to the moon! How dare that little bastard take my picture and give it to Witch Weekly," She remembered seeing Colin taking pictures of her and as much as she had tried to get him to stop, he wouldn't.

Ooh... he was going to pay!

She was disgusted and angry to see how people were still talking about her behind her back.

Turning the page, Rose's eyes bugged out when she noticed yet another picture. This time there was a picture of her running up to Harry and kissing him after the first task. The two of them looked like they were madly in love since they didn't let go of each other for a while, she had to admit as the pictures were moving and both of them did not let each other go while they were hugging.

Rose Lily Potter: Is she taken or not taken?

By: Lilith Cervantes

It seems that our little Rose is experiencing the joys of womanhood ladies and gentlemen. This picture, taken by Hogwarts student, Colin Creevey, has provided us with a picture of young Ms. Rose Potter kissing an extremely handsome young man after the Tri-Wizard Tournament.

We apologize ladies and gentlemen that we do not have much information on this young man who we can only identify as a hot and sexy teenager. The only thing we can tell you folks is that he calls himself Harry Evans and he currently lives in Hogsmeade.

Just how did Rose Potter meet with this young Harry Evans and is their relationship a romantic one or just a friendship relationship?

Word around Hogwarts claims that he is Rose Potter's boyfriend and that he and Rose has gone quite...

Rose couldn't read any more and threw the magazine on the ground before stomping on it viciously. "When Harry gets back, I'm going to pull a huge lawsuit on those nosy bastards. How dare they try to interfere with my private life?" She snarled out loud.

First thing's first, tomorrow, she was going to have a long talk with Colin Creevey. "I wonder how Harry is going to take *this*." Rose said out loud. She knew Harry was going to be mad. He was trying to avoid being put on the Daily Prophet and that idiot Colin had managed to hook a picture of the two of them together.

She prayed Harry wouldn't kill Colin before she did...

(((o)))

"Ms. Patil! Ms. Brown! Please leave Ms. Potter alone!" McGonagall barked at the two gossiping children at the back of the class.

Rose sighed in relief and glanced gratefully at the transfiguration teacher. Ever since that article in Witch Weekly had come out about her using some weird kind of potion or spell to make her look like what she was now, she had been approached by girls all over Hogwarts, including some that she did not know. People were offering her money, gifts, and many other things if she would give them some information on what she was using to make her look as gorgeous as she was now.

Oddly enough, even Cedric and Malfoy had approached her and asked her if what she was using would work on men.

She pointedly ignored them all. After all, they had treated her like dirt before the task. Why should she treat them any differently?

Cedric backed off silently, not wanting to lose his privates, but Malfoy couldn't leave without a few parting jibes. Rose responded with a few

well placed hexes. A detention was worth putting Malfoy in the hospital wing.

But Malfoy hadn't learned a thing. Almost immediately after being discharged from Madam Pomfrey's care, he verbally attacked her again, this time insulting her parents. Rose hit him with an *incarcerous* and used a permanent sticking charm to hang him from the ceiling. He missed a whole day of class as teachers had tried their best to take him down. In the end, McGonagall had 'politely' asked her to release the spell. Since Malfoy was the instigator, she received no punishment except for some subtracted points, because she had used her wand against him.

After the yelling match she gave McGonagall, the teachers have been extra nice to her lately. It was like the whole school had turned a 180 after the first task.

"Now that Ms. Brown and Patil are giving me their full attention," The Deputy Headmistress said sending a glare to the two girls who blushed in embarrassment. "I have something important to say to you all."

Everyone gave the Transfiguration teacher their most utmost attention.

"This year at Hogwarts we will be holding a Yule Ball," she paused to let the giggling from the girls and the groaning from the boys die down. "The Yule Ball is a traditional part of the Tri-Wizard Tournament that gives us the opportunity for us to socialize with our foreign guests. Now the ball will only be open to fourth years and above. Although you may invite a younger student if you wish..."

Rose was annoyed that Lavender and Parvati were still giggling. Just what was so funny and interesting about a Ball anyway?

"Dress robes will be worn," Professor McGonagall said not even paying attention to them, "and the ball will start at eight o'clock in the evening on Christmas Day, finishing at midnight in the Great Hall. Now then..."

This time, McGonagall took the moment to stare deliberately around the class.

“The Yule Ball is of course, a chance for us all to... err... let our hair down,” she said, in a disapproving voice.

Rose couldn't help but roll her eyes as both Lavender and Parvati giggled harder than ever. She knew why they were laughing and she found it immature that they were laughing about it.

Professor McGonagall, with her hair in a tight bun, looked as though she had never let her hair down in any sense.

“But that does NOT mean,” Professor McGonagall went on, glaring at the giggling girls, “That we will be relaxing the standards of behavior we expect from Hogwarts students. I will be most seriously displeased if a Gryffindor student embarrasses the school in any way.”

This time, the Deputy Headmistress turned her gaze to Rose, knowing full well that she was most likely to raise hell with her latest attitude and angry temper problem.

Rose was tempted to say, “Why are you looking at me for?” but had desisted. It would be a dumb question that anyone could answer. She knew she had a temper problem and she heard from Hagrid that she had inherited it from her mother.

The bell rang and there was the usual scuffle of activity as everyone packed their bags and swung them onto their shoulders.

Professor McGonagall called above the noise, “Ms. Potter, a word, if you please.”

Making sure she had everything in her shoulder pack, Rose began walking toward the Transfiguration teacher who immediately began to speak.

“Ms. Potter, as a Champion, you and your partner...”

"I know Professor. I know that I am required to have a partner for the dance. As a Champion, I must go, correct?"

The Transfiguration teacher blinked.

"I read about the Tri-Wizard Tournament in Hogwarts, A History." She said answering the old woman's unasked question.

The old woman nodded at this, not surprised that her student knew. She had been showing a higher understanding in magic as of late. It would not surprise her if young Rose had begun studying and reading everything she could get her hands on.

"Well, if you understand, know that you will be unable to return to the Dursleys for Christmas break and..."

While the Transfiguration was nagging away, Rose couldn't help but give the old woman a look of disbelief. Go back to the Dursleys for Christmas break? Hah! That would be the day she proclaimed herself as Voldemort's daughter.

"Professor," said Rose, when the Transfiguration teacher had asked her if she had any questions. "Will it be okay for me if I stay in Hogsmeade for Christmas break? I'll return to the castle and of course, I *will* be present for the Yule Ball, I promise."

The Head of Gryffindor raised an eyebrow at this. "What would you want to stay in Hogsmeade for child?"

Brushing off the child comment, Rose spoke in a serious voice. "I need some privacy. As you can tell, I'm not a social person at Hogwarts these days," She said, not hiding the fact that she had been indeed an anti-social witch the past few weeks. "A lot of people tend to annoy me because of my fame and reputation, so I was wondering if it was possible for me to stay in Hogsmeade, where I can find peace and quiet during vacation break."

By the time that Rose had finished talking, McGonagall's lips had thinned out into a straight line, meaning she disapproved of this very much.

“And just where are you planning to stay in Hogsmeade? The Three Broomsticks is quite expensive during Christmas time.”

Rose blinked.

“Well... I was going to stay at one of the homes my parents left for me in their will. I want to see if I can find anything about them. I was never told much and I was planning on taking the time to find anything about my parents.” Rose lied, thankful for her occlumency. She really wanted to stay at Harry’s place in Hogsmeade for a while.

McGonagall’s eyes softened at the mention of the girl’s parents.

“I will talk to the Headmaster about this. If it was up to me Ms. Potter, I would give you permission, but sadly, I do not have permission.”

Rose nodded to the Transfiguration teacher. “Thank you Professor.” She said in a thankful voice.

Before she could even leave, the teacher’s voice had spoken again.

“Ms. Potter, I must ask you to refrain from threatening Mr. Creevey next time. He really means no harm and I’m pretty sure he would not even dare attempt to do something foolish again.”

Rose was thankful McGonagall couldn’t see her roll her eyes. A few days ago, the first thing she had done to Colin Creevey when she found out about the article photo he sold to Witch Weekly, was drag him out of his dormitory and threaten to chop off his manhood should he *ever* sell a picture of her again. Should she even find out he took another picture of her and sell it to anybody, even would be wishing he was facing the Hungarian Horntail instead of a certain red head.

“I can’t guarantee his survival.” Rose responded back while leaving. “But I’ll try.”

Chapter 10

The small city of Freiberg, Germany was quiet during the evening. There were few people awake at this hour and even fewer people out on the streets. Freiberg was founded in the 12th century by Duke Konrad of Zähringen as a free market town; hence its name, which translates to "free town". What most muggles didn't know was that the Duke was a wizard, from a long line of wizards and witches, and he founded the town with a secondary, hidden purpose of being a wizard haven. Originally, the town was founded on the outskirts of the Black Forest, but over the next 800 years, the town became a city.

This was fortunate for Harry, because his long distance apparation was never the most silent of appearances, and he appeared behind a building with a loud, echoing crack. Taking a moment to get his bearings, Harry consulted the map he brought with him to confirm just where exactly he was. He was relieved to find that he was only a few hundred feet from the apparation point in Freiburg's Diagon Alley equivalent and he made his way quickly to a nearby hotel. Harry remembered the hotel from when he Ron and Hermione went horcrux hunting three years ago and Harry hoped that they hadn't changed too much. Taking a moment to cast a translation charm on himself, he made his way into the building.

"Welcome to the Marriot in Freiberg!" The desk clerk happily chirped. She was a younger girl, probably seventeen or eighteen and had medium length brown hair and brown eyes. Harry personally thought she was much too cheerful, just like the last time he had been here. "Do you have a reservation or would you like to rent a room?"

"I'll need a room for the night please," he said. Harry only needed the room for the one night and he planned on being out of Germany and back in England by dinner tomorrow. He handed over his information when prompted for it and crossed his fingers, hoping the fake I.D. would work. After all, he didn't technically exist in this world. He waited patiently while the girl ran the info.

"It looks like everything is in order Mr. Dursley." She said as the printer on her desk spat out a receipt. Harry held in his sigh of relief

and took the plastic key card when it was offered to him. "Your room is number 504 on the fifth floor. Thank you and have a pleasant night."

Harry nodded his thanks and said a brief good night before heading up to his room. Ironically, it seemed that he had gotten the same room that he had stayed in before. Fate had a strange sense of humor it seemed. Harry pulled his wand from his holster and instinctually scanned the room for bugs, traps and wards but found none. With a sigh of relief, he placed his trunk on the bed and enlarged it. For what seemed like the thousandth time, Harry inventoried what he had and what he needed.

Harry pulled his invisibility cloak out and neatly folded it in the bed. Next, he pulled out his Firebolt and his battle robes. Harry looked at the robes fondly as he folded them next to his cloak. They were made of cured dragon hide; specifically that of the Horntail he had bested during *his* first task. The dragon had been killed by a larger female and Charley gave a piece of the hide to Remus. Remus had the armor commissioned specifically for Harry and gave it to him as a birthday present on Harry's seventeenth birthday. It was the last thing Remus had given him, before he and Tonks were killed. Harry remembered the prophetic words Remus had told him when he handed the parcel over.

"Harry," Remus started, as he guided Harry out of the Burrow for some privacy. He paused and remained silent for a good three minutes before continuing. Harry patiently waited while Remus gathered his thoughts. "Harry, I'm not going to be around forever."

Harry swallowed the lump that instantly developed in his throat. He had a feeling about what Remus was going to say, but Harry didn't want to hear it. Here, standing before him was his last connection to his parents.

Remus cleared his throat. It seemed that whatever it was that he wanted to say was as hard for him to say as it was for Harry to listen to. "I wanted you to have these," he said, handing the wrapped box to Harry. Harry took it gently, like it was made of the most fragile crystal

imaginable. Remus watched as Harry stared at the box with a hesitant look on his face. "Well...open it."

Harry tore off the paper then opened the box and gasped. There, shining as if freshly polished was a full set of dragon hide battle robes. Harry looked up at Remus at a loss for anything to say. "But...I...how?"

Remus smiled at the flustered teen. "I'm glad you like them," he said as Harry pulled the dragon hide robe out of the box. He waited until he had Harry's attention before continuing. "I want you to wear them whenever you go into battle, if you have the foresight to remember. Like I said before, I won't always be around to protect you, and I can only hope that those robes will do a halfway decent job of it."

Harry set the robe back in the box and then pulled the werewolf into a crushing hug. "Thank you Remus,"

It wasn't long after that, that Remus and Tonks went down fighting.

In a way, Harry was happy that Remus was alive and well in this dimension, even though he wasn't technically his Remus. Harry took the moment to renew his vow to make sure that Rose never lost the two parental figures she had left.

Almost as if on queue, Harry felt the twinge in his mind that indicated that Rose was attempting to open the link. He prayed that she wouldn't be so stupid as to open it. He told Rose that he would be in Germany on Thursday and Friday and warned her that if she should open the link, her magic would be drained in a matter of seconds. He breathed a sigh of relief when he felt the twinge subside. Perhaps she just had Harry in her thoughts. Harry sent a small burst of comfort through the link before turning his thoughts to his plans for the bunker.

Harry pulled a square of parchment from his trunk that he had sketched a map of the bunker from memory on. If he recalled correctly, the entrance to the bunker was heavily charmed and warded to keep both muggles and wizards alike away. The only charm that Harry didn't have to worry about was the muggle repelling charm, but the others; the *fideliis* charm, the *confundus* charm and

most importantly the *concutio* (terror) charm he did. Harry hadn't wished his Hermione was with him more than he did right then.

Hermione had been the one to tear down the wards on the bunker the first time. Harry seriously doubted that they would have made it in with out her. He sighed heavily and pushed the thought from his mind. He had work to do. A simple *finite incantatum* would dispel the confundus charm, and Harry sincerely hoped that his runic equation to counteract the *concutio* charm was correct or this would be the shortest sortie in history. As for the *fidelius*; the only reason Harry knew of the bunker in the first place was that Grindelwald, the original caster of the charm, was long dead and the fidelius had decayed so much that it was very unreliable. All he needed to do to bypass it was, wait for a moment of clarity and simply enter the bunker... If only it were that easy.

The bunker was heavily trapped, but fortunately most of them could be bypassed simply by casting a mage sight spell to see the magic itself, the casting a finite on the trap.

Moving on with the plan, Harry checked what to do once inside the bunker. He remembered that Grindelwald kept his personal army of Inferi in the bunker to guard it. Inferi were weak to fire, and couldn't stand the heat and light so a simple *incendio* or an *incendium flagello* (Flame Whip) would take care of them. The hard part would be the escape.

While he fended off the zombies, Harry would also have to bring down the aparation wards then make a mad dash for the diadem in the desk. Yet again, Harry missed his friends, if only to have someone to help him with this insane plan. Harry reviewed the plan once more and then turned in for the night. He would need a full nights sleep if he were to tackle the bunker successfully the next day.

(((o)))

Harry pulled his invisibility cloak off and stuffed it into his rucksack as he approached the entrance to the bunker. It seemed that he lucked out. The *fidelius* charm had fluctuated out and Harry had no trouble seeing the thick, riveted iron door imbedded into a hillside. Harry thanked his good fortune and cast a quick *finite incantatum* at the

door to bring down the confundus charm before he approached it. Harry then began to draw the necessary runes around the door to bring down the *concutio* charm. The *concutio* charm would activate on anyone passing through the doorway and send the victim into convulsions as they reenacted their deepest, darkest most horrifying fear. That was the last thing Harry needed.

His fears had changed since his third year at Hogwarts, where he would hear his parent's death. Over the years, everything compounded on itself and Harry's greatest fear became him killing his friends and family. The last time he had encountered a dementor, Harry was nearly killed by the overwhelming depression that settled over him like a wet blanket. He was forced to relive Hermione's death, Sirius' death, Cedric's and then finally his parent's deaths. The *concutio* charm would force Harry to relive all of those, but a thousand times worse; it would be Harry killing them. Harry didn't want to deal with that.

Finally, sweat pouring down his brow from the concentration, Harry finished the runic equation and the two spells canceled each other out with a zap and a flash of light. Harry took a moment to rest and took a drink of water. He gathered himself and prodded at the door hesitantly. It creaked open on its rusty hinges and Harry was assaulted by a gust of warm air, rife with the stench of decay. "Just like last time..." he muttered.

He cast the mage sight spell and had to squint as his vision was assaulted with color. The spell, cast on the user's eyes, allowed a wizard or witch to literally 'see' magic. Various spells and runes would show up in differing colors based on how dangerous and powerful the magic was. The outside of the bunker glowed a bright sky blue now that the terror charm had been dispelled, telling Harry that while there was a lot of magic there, it was all essentially harmless. Harry stepped through the door and followed the path downward into the ground for a good fifty feet before coming to his first trap.

Harry remembered this trap vividly. It was the first trap Harry, Ron and Hermione had encountered on their quest for the horcruxes and the reason Hermione researched the mage sight spell. It was a dehydration spell that had been cast with a proximity charm weaved

into it. Ron had triggered it and it took everything Harry and Hermione had to keep the red haired boy from shriveling into a dry husk. Shuddering with the memory, Harry dispelled the trap and cautiously went down further into the bunker. After about another fifty feet the ramp leveled out and the stench became more pronounced. If he hadn't been down here before, the moaning and screaming of the Inferi would tell him that he was almost there.

He readied an *incendium flagello* on the tip of his wand before charging headlong into the bunker proper. Harry stopped when he felt like he ran through an icy waterfall. His first thought was that he missed another *concutio* charm but then realized that the feeling was different. The terror charm didn't make the victim feel cold. Dementors did though...

Suddenly Harry felt like all the happiness was torn from the world. He was cold, so cold. He wanted to lie down and never move again. Then the memories started.

Harry held his wand limply in his hand, unsure of what to do. Ron had one of his arms around Hermione's neck and his wand pressed hard against her temple. He had a wild look in his eyes. "What now, Potter?" he sneered. "Take another step closer and I spread the mudblood's brains across the street."

Hermione looked at Harry pleadingly.

"Please Ron," Harry all but begged. "I'll do whatever you want, just don't hurt Hermione..."

Ron's face distorted in rage. "No!" he spat. "If I can't have her, then NO one can!" And with that, he cast the killing curse, and Hermione slumped lifelessly to the cobblestones...

Only one couple was still battling, apparently unaware of the new arrival. Harry saw Sirius duck Bellatrix's jet of red light: He was laughing at her. "Come on, you can do better than that!" he yelled, his voice echoing around the cavernous room.

The second jet of light hit him squarely on the chest.

The laughter had not quite died from his face, but his eyes widened in shock.

It seemed to take Sirius an age to fall. His body curved in a graceful arc as he sank backward through the ragged veil hanging from the arch.

And Harry saw the look of mingled fear and surprise on his godfather's wasted, once-handsome face as he fell through the ancient doorway and disappeared behind the veil, which fluttered for a moment as though in a high wind and then fell back into place...

From far away, above his head, he heard a high, cold voice say, "Kill the spare!"

A swishing noise, and a second voice, which screeched the words; "Avada Kedavra"

A blast of green light blazed through Harry's eyelids, and he heard something heavy fall to the ground beside him; the pain in his scar reached such a pitch that he retched, and then it diminished; terrified of what he was about to see, he opened his stinging eyes.

Cedric was laying spread eagled on the ground beside him. He was dead...

"No!" Lily shrieked at Voldemort. "Please! Not Harry!"

"Move aside woman!"

"Please, anybody but Harry!"

Then a whooshing sound and a green light...

Unable to control herself, she ran past a few Ministry wizards who were ordered to make sure none of the audience would interfere with the first task. When she reached Harry, Rose flung her arms around his neck and hugged him for all she was worth. "I did it! Did you see me? I got the egg and defeated the dragon!" She shrieked out loud excitedly.

Harry couldn't help but smile at the happiness that the red head was exuding as he wrapped his arms around the bubbly girl.

Neither of them noticed that the crowd was watching the two of them holding each other with abandon.

"Calm down Rose, I think they are going to call out your score." Harry said.

Rose wasn't listening to a word he was saying. She was just so happy that she had completed the first task that she kissed Harry hard and right on the lips, much to the annoyance of the girls who had their eyes on Harry when he was in the stands. When she finally broke the kiss, she blushed prettily and looked quite flustered.

Harry simply smirked. "Did you enjoy that my little flower?" Harry teased.

ROSE! Harry focused on that memory; every feeling of love that Rose elicited in him. *"EXPECTO PATRONUM!"* He bellowed.

A huge silver stag erupted from the end of his wand and began to flay the Dementors in the room apart. The evil creatures began to screech and flee and Harry suddenly felt the warmth return to his limbs. "Keep the Dementors away!" he commanded his Patronus. The stag gave no acknowledgement but simply continued to destroy the wraiths. Harry began to cast *incendio* after *incendio*, blasting the approaching Inferi away and lighting them on fire. He did so until he had cleared a path way to the desk where he knew that the diadem had been carelessly stashed.

Harry dashed to the desk and quickly located the drawer. Ripping it open, Harry only had enough time to widen his eyes in fear as the blast of white light nearly tore his left arm from his body. Harry screamed and slumped against the far wall, clutching his ruined shoulder. He swore he could feel the bone beneath his hand as his blood gushed between his fingers. "Dammit!" he swore. "Forgot the trap on the desk..."

The entire bunker began to shake as the self-destruct kicked in. Harry pulled himself shakily to his feet and retrieved Ravenclaw's diadem

from the drawer and glared at it... Stupid thing. He glanced at Prongs who was prancing between Dementors and looked like he was genuinely enjoying tormenting the dark creatures and willed him to keep going. Harry then concentrated on his hotel room and apparated away... or tried to. He forgot completely about the anti-aparation wards, and slammed into them, agitating his shoulder and collapsing to the ground in pain. The bunker gave a huge lurch and a huge chunk of concrete crashed to the floor, narrowly missing crushing his head.

Harry slumped against the concrete wall and began to laugh madly. After all he had been through, Harry Potter; the boy who lived and defeated the greatest dark lord in recorded history was going to die in a collapsing bunker. It was too bad that he wasn't a...

Harry mentally slapped himself. He did have a way out. He also had a way in, but he and his stupid Gryffindor attitude had to jump in feet first with out thinking... He completely forgot that he was a phoenix animagus and could flame through any and all wards. With a rueful sigh, Harry concentrated hard on his hotel room and vanished in a burst of blue flame.

(((o)))

Rose gritted her teeth in frustration and it took everything she had to not hex the poor boy standing nervously before her. Since she had woken up this morning it seemed there was an endless stream of boys waiting to ask her to the Yule Ball. She had started out politely, telling the boys, "No, but thank you for asking me." Eventually, the politeness began to wane, and the last boy who asked her, Zacharias Smith, received a curt and short reply. Rose had even been asked by some boys twice now! And Colin Creevey wouldn't leave her be, dropping hints such as, "If you need a date..." or "I have nothing to do that night..." She was fast tiring of it.

Rose took a deep breath and tried her best to muster a kind face. Instead, her smile showed too many teeth and the boy who was currently asking her to the ball, Anthony Goldstein of Ravenclaw, shied away nervously. "I'm, sorry, but I already have a date." She

tried not to snarl but was pretty sure there was a growling undertone to her voice.

Anthony scurried away hurriedly without as much as a 'goodbye', and Rose was glad to see him go. She was fast becoming tired of the day and its endless suitors. She began to wonder what exactly happened to the Hogwarts rumor mill. Normally, the news that she had a date would have already been spread across the school and most likely into Hogsmeade. Then again, she hadn't been seen asking anyone either, so there was nothing to base the rumor off of. Indeed, she hadn't even thought to ask Harry to take her.

Perhaps the worst of the lot had to be Ron. He had been among the first of the boys to ask her out, having ambushed her in the common room as she descended from the girl's dorms. His proposal hadn't been the smoothest, or the most appealing and Rose had to keep herself from socking the poor boy. As it was, she merely hexed his mouth from his face after he threw his arm over her shoulder and pulled her off to a corner.

"So, when are you gonna ask me to the ball?" he asked her.

Rose simply blinked in confusion. Her mind was still waking up and she was still groggy. "What?"

"You know? The Yule Ball." Ron said with a hopeful expression on his face. "I've been waiting for you to ask since McGonagall told us about it."

It took a few seconds for this to process in Rose's head. Did Ron really expect her to ask him simply because they had been friends? Almost as to confirm what she just thought, Ron piped in, "After all, I am your best friend."

The edges of Rose's vision tinged red. What that slimy, no good...She whipped her wand from her arm holster and pointed it squarely between the redhead's eyes. "You think, after how you've been treating me for the entire year, that I'd ask YOU to the Ball?" she spat.

Ron held his hands up defensively and backed further into the corner.

“You’ve been nothing but a huge GIT ever since my name was pulled from the goblet. Maybe if you could have gotten over your misplaced jealousy, MAYBE then I would have thought about asking you! But as it stands now, Ronald Weasley, you’re no friend of mine,”

With that, Rose turned her back on the red faced boy and made for the portrait hole, but Ron grabbed her shoulder. “Wait just a second,” he spluttered.

Rose whirled around, her face furious. “Shut. UP!” she shouted, and with a wave of her wand, Ron’s mouth vanished. He staggered away from her in a panic and Rose stormed out the portrait hole. Everyone in the common room was silent, save the twins who were laughing their heads off.

Rose received a detention from McGonagall for using a wand against a classmate but she felt it was more than worth it. Fortunately for Rose, her display with Ron had dissuaded the other Gryffindor boys from asking her, lest she hex off something of theirs.

So far ten different boys had asked her to the Ball since she had woken this morning, and she hadn’t even had breakfast yet! But she considered herself lucky that neither Cedric nor Draco were among them.

“Hello Rose.”

Speak of the devil...

“Yes, Diggory?” Rose asked levelly, with her back turned to the Hufflepuff. Had any of Rose’s former friends been around, they could have warned Cedric that that tone of voice coming from Rose usually meant an explosion was looming.

Cedric cleared his throat, obviously preparing to say something he had practiced. “I was thinking,” (Big surprise there, Rose thought.) “Since the two of us are the Hogwarts champions perhaps we could...”

Rose didn’t let him finish as she turned to face him. “No, Diggory,” she said, short and to the point. Cedric looked affronted but Rose

plowed on. "I already told you how I felt about you before the first task. I meant it then, and I mean it now. Leave me alone unless you want to lose something." And with that, Rose turned her back on him and headed toward the library. But for the second time that day, someone grabbed her shoulder. Rose was really becoming tired of this.

"Now wait just a second..." Cedric blurted. Twice in one day...

Rose had had enough. She spun around; slapping Cedric's arm from her shoulder and in an instant had her wand stuck under his chin. "I warned you, Diggory!" she seethed.

Cedric backed away, a stubborn expression on his face. "If you won't go with me willingly then," he said, drawing his wand. "Then I'll force you." By this time most of the students in the great hall and in the passageways had gathered to watch the confrontation.

The resulting duel was short but intense. Cedric fired some kind of silver light at Rose, but she parried it with the tip of her wand and retaliated with a stunner. Cedric was no slouch and instantly had a *protego* shield up, blocking the stunner, but he failed to see the *petrificus totalis* that clipped his left thigh. It was enough contact for the jinx to take effect and Cedric stiffened and toppled to the stone floor.

The audience was silent as Rose stalked over to the fallen Hufflepuff and glowered down at him. "I warned you..." she whispered. Cedric's eyes showed a hint of fear as Rose brandished her wand. She silently cast the charm that made a spell permanent, the same one she used on the sticking charms she used to pin Malfoy and his cronies to the wall, on the petrifying jinx binding Cedric. Then she silently transfigured his robes into a frilly yellow dress. "And you can stay that way for all I care," She added to the laughs of the crowd.

Satisfied with her work, Rose turned to leave and bumped directly into an angry Professor McGonagall. "Ms. Potter!" the teacher nearly shrieked. "Did we or did we not have a talk about using your wand against your fellow students?"

Rose suddenly found the stone floor very interesting. She mumbled something vaguely affirmative. McGonagall told one of the watching

prefects to do something about Diggory and then seized one of Rose's arms and dragged her off. She dragged Rose all the way to her office and shut the door behind them. Pointing to a seat; a stiff-backed wooden chair, McGonagall took a seat behind her desk. "Well?" she asked in exasperation.

Rose put her best innocent expression on her face. She knew that she was going to be punished and hoped that she would weasel her way out of anything too severe. "What?"

"Do not 'what' me, young lady," McGonagall snapped. "You know very well what you did; twice in one day even and AFTER a talk and reprimand. Did you or did you not listen to me this morning?"

"I had a very good reason..." Rose began.

McGonagall raised her eyebrows expectantly. "What on earth could be reason enough for jinxing and embarrassing a fellow student?"

Rose proceeded to tell her teacher everything about the fight from her perspective. When she finished, McGonagall looked less severe than she had when she brought Rose into the office. "Are there any witnesses that could possibly vouch for you?" she asked.

Rose nodded. "Most of the people watching when you showed up were there from the beginning," she said. A small smile formed on her face; perhaps she wouldn't get in trouble after all.

McGonagall looked thoughtful for a moment before speaking. She nodded to herself. "Very well," she began. "I will investigate this. But I am adding another four days onto your existing detention with Mr. Filch."

Rose opened her mouth to protest, but the teacher interrupted. "You're lucky I'm not bringing this to the Headmaster, Ms. Potter." At the mention of Dumbledore, Rose realized that she was indeed lucky, so she nodded her consent.

"For what it's worth, I'm sorry," she added weakly. McGonagall simply nodded back and dismissed her.

Rose realized that she was going to be late for potions and hurried back to her dorm to get her bag. She passed Cedric along the way, and noticed with a smirk that while someone had managed to cancel the petrifying charm, they hadn't been able to change his robes back. She snickered all the way into the dungeons.

Rose sat at her usual table and began to pull her supplies out when Hermione sat down heavily next to her. Rose paused and glanced warily at her former friend. Hermione seemed to be nervous about something and couldn't stop fidgeting. "Yes?" Rose prompted. Hermione seemed to need to say something.

"I'm sorry," Hermione blurted out. Rose blinked bemusedly. Hermione looked pleadingly at Rose and continued. "I'm so sorry for treating you the way I have been and letting our friendship go as far as it did."

Rose couldn't help herself and smiled at the bushy haired witch. "Well, it's about time," she said with a chuckle. She vaguely noticed Ron storm into the room and sit at a table with Neville. He was casting nasty glares in the girls' direction.

"Excuse me?" Hermione asked.

"It looked like it was tearing you apart," Rose explained as she resumed setting her equipment up. "I was simply wondering when you'd finally crack."

Hermione smiled ruefully. "Yes, well... I missed you but..." she trailed off with an embarrassed blush.

"...You didn't know how to go about apologizing," Rose finished. Hermione nodded gratefully. "Well, I'm glad you finally did. I missed you too."

Hermione gave Rose a tight hug and began to pull her own potions equipment out. The two of them shared a companionable silence before Hermione finally asked, "So what happened with you and Cedric?"

There was the Hogwarts rumor mill she remembered oh so fondly. It had taken less than ten minutes for the tale of her confrontation with

Cedric to be passed around the castle. "You heard?" Rose asked. Hermione nodded and waited for Rose to explain. "He tried to force me to go to the ball with him at wand point."

Hermione looked affronted, but Rose continued. "But I may have pulled my wand on him first..."

"That still doesn't give him an excuse!" Hermione blurted. "Wand point, honestly. So..."

"So what?"

"So who *are* you going with?"

"Harry," Rose said, as if that fact was common. Gravity kept you attached to the earth, the forbidden forest was forbidden, the Slytherins were gits, and she was going to the Ball with Harry. The fact that she hadn't asked Harry yet completely skipped her mind. She had yet to even ask if he wanted to go, and hoped that he would. Rose noticed Hermione's pensive look. "What?"

"He doesn't go to Hogwarts, right?" Hermione asked. Rose nodded hesitantly. "I don't know if he'll be able to attend. Remember, the ball is for students and faculty only."

A panicked expression settled on Rose's face. She hadn't thought about that. What if Harry couldn't go? Who would go with her then? She decided to ask McGonagall after potions class and hoped her recent skirmish with Cedric wouldn't put a damper on her decision. "I'll just have to find out then, won't I?" she voiced. Hermione simply nodded.

There was about five minutes before class started and Snape would burst into the class room. "So..." Rose said.

"So what?" Hermione asked nervously. She knew the question that was coming.

"Who are *you* going with?" Rose asked with an impish grin.

“Who says I’m going with anyone?” Hermione said meekly. Her blush told Rose everything she wanted to know but ‘who’.

Rose’s impish grin went up a few notches. “Well, I’m not as uninformed as you’d like to think, for one,” Rose said. “And two, your blush says it all.”

Hermione giggle uncharacteristically. “It’s a secret,” she said quietly. Rose already had a good idea as to whom Hermione was going with. Harry told her all about his ball, and figured that nothing would change here. She hoped that Krum made her happy.

With a cheeky grin, Rose couldn’t help but say, “I bet he’s not half as good with his broom as Harry is...”

Hermione gasped in astonishment and cuffed Rose on the arm. Neither of them noticed when Snape swooped into the room and took ten points from Gryffindor for ‘disrupting the class’. But then, neither of them really cared.

(((o)))

Potions had been oddly subdued. Just like Snape had promised, they had reviewed and examined their antidotes in class but he hadn’t actually poisoned anyone. Rose guessed that it had something to do with Dumbledore’s new arrangement with the potions master. She was pretty sure that if it were up to him, Snape *would* have poisoned the students, just to spite her. Either way, Rose was relieved when class ended.

Rose and Hermione parted ways when they came to the transfiguration classroom, and Hermione promised to talk more, later that evening. With a wave goodbye, Rose knocked on McGonagall’s office door.

“Enter,” she heard from the other side.

Rose opened the door and stuck her head in the room. “Professor, do you have time for a couple of questions?” she asked.

McGonagall beckoned her in and Rose took a seat in the same chair that she had been reprimanded in just a few hours earlier. "Um..." Rose began hesitantly. "Firstly, about the Yule Ball. Are we allowed to have dates from outside the castle?" she asked.

The Professor smiled knowingly. She knew as much as there was about Rose's boyfriend and expected this question. There was nothing in the rules that forbade anyone from outside the school from attending the ball. Dumbledore had even encouraged it, as he was most curious about the Evans boy. "Of course," she said. "You're hoping to invite your boyfriend...Harry was it?"

Rose nodded.

"Then by all means, invite him," McGonagall said, perhaps a bit more cheerfully than necessary. "So, long as he knows the rules, then I see no problem."

It was Rose's turn to smile knowingly. Harry knew the rules, perhaps better than Rose herself did. He may have not followed them when he attended Hogwarts, but he definitely knew the rules. "I'll ask him straight away," she said. "My other question; what about me staying in Hogsmeade?"

McGonagall's lips thinned disapprovingly. Rose's request was transparent at this point. She assumed that the girl wanted to stay with her boyfriend. Little did she know just how correct she was. "Unfortunately, the Headmaster said no," She said. "He would rather have you here at the castle."

A cloud passed in front of Rose's face. Once again, the meddlesome old man had interfered with her life. She forcefully restrained the urge to scream at McGonagall and focused on her Occlumency exercises. It wasn't the old woman's fault. She took a deep breath and resolved to talk to Harry about it. She was sure that he could manage something. "Ok, well, thank you Professor."

Rose left the transfiguration classroom and headed up to Gryffindor tower to get some revising in. Harry had given her a book of advanced Auror tactics and spells and she really wanted to page through it. Reaching the tower, she retrieved the book from her trunk

and plopped down in her favorite armchair and began to skim it. Rose could see where Harry got a lot of his spells from. The book was packed with shields, restraining hexes and tactics that would come in handy for any Auror.

She perused the book for most of the afternoon and into the evening before she was startled by a tapping on the window. Looking up, she saw a brown owl on the ledge with a letter tied to its leg. She recognized the bird as the one Sirius used to send letters to her. Hurrying over to the window, she let the owl in and took the letter from its leg. "Sorry, I don't have anything for you."

The bird hooted and glared at her sullenly before lighting back on the window sill. It seemed that Sirius expected a reply. Since she had met him, Rose always anticipated letters from her godfather. She was always pleased to hear what he had to say. After all, he was the closest thing she had to family, next to Harry of course. But now, she was certain that Dumbledore had Sirius in his pocket, and she was pretty sure about what the letter was going to say.

Opening it, she began to read...

Dear Rosie,

Congratulations on getting past the Horntail. Who ever put your name in that goblet shouldn't be feeling too happy about now! I was going to suggest the Conjunctivitus Curse as a dragon's eyes are its weakest point – So that's what Krum did, Rose mused. – but your way was better. I'm impressed. Don't go getting complacent now. You still have two more tasks to go.

Now to play the godfather part... What's this I hear about you dating some guy? You really need to be more careful, after all, he could be a death eater or something. Rose rolled her eyes. I'd like to get to know this bloke. Maybe we should meet. When's your next Hogsmeade weekend? I'll meet with the two of you then. Anyway, take care and don't do anything I wouldn't do. And make sure to let me know about any strange happenings, okay?

Sirius

Rose scoffed. That was rather blatant, she thought. Still, she didn't like keeping secrets from her godfather. She loved him, and looked forward to seeing him again. She added another thing to her list of requests of Harry. She needed to ask if she could reveal Harry to Hermione and now Sirius. She only hoped that he would say yes.

Chapter 11

Little Hangleton was quiet the night of November nineteenth. The air was a bit chilly but it was still and calm. None of the residents had any concern. So it goes without saying that when a ball of flame erupted near the old Gaunt estate, no one really cared. The Gaunt house, more like hovel, hadn't been inhabited for the longest time. Its last resident, one Morfin Gaunt died after he had been sent to prison for murder and the residents of Little Hangleton gladly let the house ruin. It went undisturbed for years until one night, when a black cloaked figure stole into the house and then left soon after. No one took notice and no one would have brought any attention to the act if they had. The ruin was best left alone.

Harry staggered slightly as he flamed to Little Hangleton. This was his last stop before going back to Hogsmeade. He needed to acquire the ring of Gaunt, one of the last of Voldemort's horcruxes. Once he had it, he would go back to his house and store both the diadem and the ring in a special warded room he had created just to keep the horcruxes in. He would destroy them, but he was sure that Voldemort would be able to sense their destruction. So Harry had decided to wait until the even of his resurrection before cleansing the artifacts.

Harry cautiously approached the ramshackle hut. He remembered the place from the pensieve memories that Dumbledore had shown him just before the old mans death. The rotten carcass of the snake was still nailed to the door; what little of both there was left. Harry reached out with his left arm to open the door and had to bite out a scream as his shoulder twinged painfully.

After the debacle in the bunker, Harry had managed to flame back to his hotel room. Once there, he managed to patch up his arm with the limited medical knowledge he possessed. It would have to do until he was done here in Little Hangleton. "I'll stop by St. Mungos when I get back to London," he muttered to himself.

He pushed the door open gently and stepped into the ruin. The door had agitated the thick layer of dust on the floor and Harry cast a quick bubble head charm on himself. It served two purposes; Harry didn't

exactly want to breathe the dust, and he remembered from the pensieve memory that there was a gas trap on the hole the horcrux was stored in. Struggling to remember where exactly the loose floorboard was that hid the hole; Harry began to look around the cottage. Either the Gaunts weren't very family oriented or the place had been pillaged long ago, as Harry found no indication as to who had lived here. As he paced around the floor he suddenly heard a creak from underfoot. The floorboard.

Harry knelt down and began to scan the wood for any magical energy. Fortunately, the only thing he picked up was faded residual energy that indicated a magical family had once lived here. Satisfied, he carefully pried the loose wood away from the rest of the floor. It wouldn't do for him to fall victim to a muggle trap either.

The wood came away cleanly and Harry released the breath he had been holding. He was walking into this situation blindly as this was the only horcrux besides the diary and the locket that he and his friends didn't recover. The only foreknowledge that Harry had was the memory of the memory in the pensieve.

Harry though was relieved to see a green marble lockbox that was bound with silver. It seemed that the ring was definitely still here. He cast an advanced unlocking charm on the key hole and after a click, opened the box. Harry was glad he had cast the bubblehead charm because sure enough, a cloud of green gas came billowing up from the open chest. Harry cast a few airborne *scourgifys* to clear the air and turned back to the ring in the box.

It looked so harmless, sitting on a cushion of black velvet. One wouldn't think that it housed a piece of the soul of the most dangerous and evil dark lord in history. Harry closed the box and took a moment to rest. He felt he deserved it. The ring was the last of the horcruxes next to Nagini. He decided to let Rose know that he was back in England.

"Hey, Rose? Are you there?"

Her reply was almost instantaneous. **"Harry!"** she nearly shouted. **"Are you back? Hurt? How are you? I've missed you."**

Harry couldn't help but chuckle at the girl's enthusiasm. **"I'm fine, Rose, but I'm really tired right now so I can't keep the link open for long,"** he told her. **"I just wanted to let you know that I'm back in England and I'll see you soon."**

"Ok, we have a lot to talk about when you do. Just one question before you go?"

"Go on..."

"Any tips you can give me on changing a guinea pig into a guinea fowl and back again?" she asked hopefully.

Harry guffawed. He and Rose were way too much alike. He had the same problem with the same spell when he was a fourth year. **It's all about intent. You have to want the animal to change. Now I have to go. Be good."**

"Bye Harry."

Harry leaned against a wall with a tired sigh. Even that short contact nearly drained him. He hoped that he had enough magic left to apparate to St. Mungos.

After crawling over to the hole, Harry made sure not to agitate his left arm as he reached down to lift the box. As soon as he began to move it, he knew something was wrong. His consciousness began to feel dark and smothered. Harry dropped the box but it was too late, and a black mist floated up from the hole and enveloped him. The trap had been triggered and Harry was dragged forcefully into his nightmares. His last waking thought was, 'Voldemort sure does enjoy the *concutio* charm.

(((o)))

The room if you could call it that was black or more precisely nothing. It was as if nothing existed in this space, yet Harry was standing on something solid. He was lost and had no idea where he was, or what he was supposed to be doing. Then he was aware of someone's presence from behind him. Spinning around, Harry nearly had a heart attack at what he saw.

His parents were standing there. But something was wrong with them. They looked, for lack of a better word, incomplete. Once Harry recovered, he tried to move toward them but found that he couldn't. He had no motor control in this...room. "Mum? Dad?" he managed to say.

The two specters focused their baleful gazes on his green eyes and seemed to glare through him. Harry shivered. He suddenly felt very cold. "It's your fault..." they moaned in unison.

"What?"

"Your fault that we died..." Lily moaned.

"If it hadn't been for you, he would never have come." James said.

"No!" Harry shouted feebly. "It's not my fault!"

Then Harry was aware of a third presence to his left. Standing there, looking almost exactly like his parents was Sirius. Harry felt the blood drain from his face. Not Sirius too...

"They're right, Harry," Sirius said in a hollow voice. "If you hadn't gone to the ministry, I would have never tried to save you." Harry shook his head and tried to back away. "I would never have died."

"No...please..." Harry begged. "It wasn't my fault. It...it was Voldemort." It even sounded feeble to his ears.

"Everyone who gets close to you dies," the three moaned together. Harry fell to his knees and shook his head. He tried to deny it, but they were right. It was his fault.

"I-I'm sorry," he said weakly.

"It won't bring us back..." Lily said. "We lost our lives because of you."

Then Sirius said, "Now you have a whole new dimension of lives to ruin."

Harry's head snapped up and he looked at his godfather's specter in a panic. Rose... "No...NO!"

Then, as if on queue, a specter of Rose entered the space. "Why weren't you there to protect me, Harry?" she said in a voice as hollow as James, Lily and Sirius'. "Why'd you let Snape kill me?"

Harry clasped his head in his hand and clenched his eyes shut, but he could still see the four ghosts. Everything was his fault, and now Rose had to suffer for it too. Why did he have to interfere? Why couldn't he have just walked away?

"I thought you loved us, Harry," Rose said sadly, black tears flowing from her sunken eyes. "I thought you loved us..."

"I do love you!" he cried, reaching out to the girl. "Please forgive me...I'm so sorry, Rose."

"I'm sorry..."

(((o)))

"Dammit!" Rose swore for what seemed thousandth time that evening.

She and Hermione were seated comfortably in the Gryffindor common room and Hermione was helping Rose with her transfiguration homework. Or trying to, more like it. The more Rose failed to change her guinea pig into a guinea fowl, the more frustrated she became. And the more frustrated she became, the more she failed.

Hermione was fast becoming exasperated. She just didn't know how to convey exactly how to change the animal. It just came naturally to her, but Rose seemed not to understand. "I don't get it," she said.

"I know, I'm terrible," Rose said with a sigh. She dropped her wand and buried her head in her hands. The best she had been able to accomplish so far was giving the rodent feathers and avian feet.

"No!" Hermione backpedaled. "No, that's not it. You're holding your wand perfectly and your incantation is flawless...I don't understand."

“Then what’s wrong?” Rose asked angrily. “Why do I suck so much?”

“That’s what I can’t figure out!” Hermione said, throwing her hands up in frustration. Rose glared angrily at the bushy haired girl. “No, no, no...I’m not saying you suck. I just can’t figure out why it’s not working for you.”

“So, who *are* you going with to the Ball?” Rose said with a cheeky grin.

Hermione instantly turned red with the change of subject. “I *told* you it’s a secret,” hissed. “You’ll find out with the rest of the school next Friday.”

Suddenly, Rose felt a mental contact in her mind. It was weak, but she was certain.

“Hey, Rose? Are you there?”

It was Harry! He must be back. At least he was in England if he was contacting her. **“Harry!”** she nearly shouted. **“Are you back? Hurt? How are you? I’ve missed you.”**

“I’m fine, Rose, but I’m really tired right now so I can’t keep the link open for long,” he told her. **“I just wanted to let you know that I’m back in England and I’ll see you soon.”**

Rose was infinitely relieved to hear from him. The other night, she had had a nightmare that Harry had been killed, and she worried about him almost constantly. She had many things to tell him, and even more to ask, but she decided to listen and let him go. **“Ok, we have a lot to talk about when you do. Just one question before you go?”**

“Go on...”

“Any tips you can give me on changing a guinea pig into a guinea fowl and back again?” she asked hopefully.

Rose could hear Harry laugh hard through the link. Even he was making fun of her. Git. **It's all about intent. You have to want the animal to change. Now I have to go. Be good.**"

"Bye Harry."

Harry closed the link and noticed Hermione staring at her weirdly. "What?" she asked.

"Your face went blank there for a moment," Hermione said. "Are you feeling alright?"

"Yeah," Rose said hurriedly. "I'm fine. Just trying to think of a way to make this stupid spell work."

The two of them fell into a comfortable silence as they both pondered transfiguration. Intent, Rose thought to herself. If all it took was intent, then the stupid rodent should be clucking and flapping around the common room by now. What was holding her back? Maybe she didn't want it to change. Perhaps, she needed it to but didn't really want it to, hence the partial transformation. She just needed a reason to want it to become a bird. But what?

Did the guinea pig want to be a guinea fowl? Probably not. Then it hit her. She wanted to know that she could change it. That's all there was to it. With a smile on her face, she focused on the feeling she would get when she successfully changed the animal and cast the spell. With a small pop, the rodent became the perfect guinea fowl, right down to the markings on its feathers.

"Oh, Rose, that was brilliant!" Hermione crooned, clapping her hands excitedly. "What did you change?"

There it is, Rose thought. The satisfaction of a job well done. "I just wanted it to change," she explained. Hermione made a confused face.

"Didn't you want it to change earlier?" She asked.

Rose shook her head. "Yes but I didn't know why. It wasn't enough for classwork." She explained. "I needed to find out exactly why I *wanted* it to change. I wanted the satisfaction of a job well done."

Hermione nodded. It made sense to her. Thinking back, she realized that most transfiguration worked on the same principle. Intent. "I see," she said.

Rose concentrated and then tried a spell that Harry used in the shrieking shack to conjure the leather sofa. She waved her wand and a burgundy colored leather recliner popped into existence next to the sofa they were currently sitting on. Hermione gaped at her.

"How?" she breathed. That spell was very advanced. The only person she had ever seen using it was Dumbledore.

"Intent," Rose said with a cheeky smile. "I wanted a chair that was more comfortable than this couch. So I made one."

"But...but..." she stuttered. "HOW? You even conjured the *leather* correctly."

Rose composed herself in a playful mockery of Hermione's 'professor mode' and smoothed her robes. Right as she was about to explain, as best as she could, how she conjured the chair, her head exploded in pain and she collapsed to the floor clutching her brow. Hermione was instantly at her side as was, surprisingly, Ginny.

"Oh my god!" Hermione shrieked. "Rose!"

Ginny hesitantly reached out and felt Rose's forehead. "What's wrong with her?" she asked.

Hermione shook her head in confusion. "I don't know. Last time she told us about her head hurting like this it was you-know-who," she said. Hermione tried to get the girl's attention. "Rose? Rose, can you hear me?"

Rose couldn't, in fact, hear her. She was too busy listening to the echoing voice in her mind. It was Harry, and he was in pain and suffering. She heard a constant, 'I'm sorry, Rose...' echo over and over in her head. She quickly raised her Occlumency shields and sat up, rubbing her temples. Finally, she heard Hermione's and Ginny's worried voices.

"I'm fine," she said quickly, getting to her feet.

"Is it your scar?" Hermione asked. Rose quickly shook her head. "It's not?"

Rose glanced cautiously at Ginny, who was standing there looking just as worried as Hermione. Perhaps she should give Ginny a second chance too, but now wasn't the time for that. "No, it was..." she paused with another glance at the Weasley girl. "It was Harry. He's in trouble."

Ginny looked lost but Hermione looked resolute. "No," she said instantly. "You should go get a teacher, probably Dumbledore."

Rose glowered at the bushy haired girl. "Hell no! It's none of his business." She growled. "Besides, Harry doesn't trust him either."

Hermione looked pensive and Ginny lost. "Wait, Harry who? Is he the guy you kissed at the first task?" Ginny asked. "And what's wrong with Dumbledore?"

Rose sighed and looked at Ginny apprehensively. She still hadn't forgiven the youngest Weasley and loathed telling her anything. "Look, I don't have time for an inquisition," she said quietly. She opened the link again, and tried to reach Harry while ignoring Ginny's hurt expression.

"Harry?" she called. **"Harry, where are you?"**

The link was silent for a minute and Rose tried again. **"C'mon Harry, talk to me. Let me know you're all right."**

Rose was suddenly overcome with images pain and loss. She knew without a doubt that Harry was in trouble and her worry multiplied a thousand fold. **"Please, Harry!"**

She then saw images that were vaguely familiar. She saw a graveyard with a statue of the angel of death, a worn down manor, and lastly a run down cottage. Rose recognized them from a memory that Harry had shown her when they first met, but where were they

exactly? It took her a moment to remember but then it came to her; Little Hangleton!

“Hermione!” she suddenly blurted. “You can make portkeys, right?”

Hermione nodded hesitantly. “Yes, but...why?”

“I need to get to Little Hangleton,” Rose explained. “I *need* to get to Harry. He’s in trouble, I can feel it.”

“Rose...” Hermione began.

“Please, Hermione,” Rose begged. Hermione sighed.

“I can’t, Rose,” she said imploringly. “I don’t want to get in trouble with the ministry and even if that weren’t the case, I don’t know where Little Hangleton is. I can’t make a portkey to a place I’ve never been. I’m not that good yet.”

Rose looked at Ginny as if the younger girl would miraculously come up with an answer. Ginny just looked hurt and confused. Rose growled in exasperation and stamped her foot. She wanted; no *needed* to be by Harry’s side. Now. Then, suddenly, she vanished in a burst of golden fire.

(((o)))

As soon as the disorientation wore off, Rose blinked bemusedly. Somehow she had transported herself all the way from Hogwarts in Scotland, to the Gaunt house in Little Hangleton with little more than a thought. She glanced around at her surroundings but couldn’t see much through the dust that her appearance had kicked up. Still, she was sure that Harry was here, and she called out for him. All she received in response was a slight whimper of suffering and she made her way through the cloud of dust in that direction. When she came out on the other side she gasped.

Harry lay on the floor with what looked like an incorporeal wraith cloaking him, and he was writhing on the ground in agony. Rose hurried over and, against her better judgment, tried to shoo the wraith away, but she only got burned for her efforts. She winced in pain and

clutched her blistered hand close to her chest and hissed. She couldn't touch the thing but she needed to get it away from Harry. She didn't know how, but she knew that it was killing him slowly.

She ran through all of her options in her mind. She tried casting a light spell, but that did nothing but make the wraith harder to see. Her stunner passed straight through it and her banishing spell just fizzled before it even reached the thing. Then a crazy idea came to her. She remembered in her third year, Remus teaching her how to cast the *Patronus*. She remembered that hit worked not only on dementors but on demiguises as well, and the wraith looked like the pictures of a demiguise that she had seen.

Rose focused on every happy memory that she could, most of them being about Harry, and leveled her wand at the wraith. "*Expecto Patronum!*"

Rose gaped at the animal that erupted from the tip of her wand. When she had first learned the spell, her *Patronus* had been a stag, just like Harry's. But now, it wasn't Prongs that burst from her wand; it was a brilliant silver phoenix with disheveled feathers on its crest. Her *Patronus* was Harry's animagus form.

Rose watched with an uplifted spirit as the bird swooped through the wraith and banished it from the dank cottage. Then it flew back around and landed on her shoulder. It nuzzled her hair before dissipating. Her attention was drawn back to Harry when he moaned weakly and began to stir. She ran over to him and sank to her knees. "Harry?" she asked. Harry looked so fragile that she was afraid to touch him.

"Rose." His voice was no more than a whisper. "I'm so sorry..."

She burst into tears and wrapped her arms tightly around Harry. He winced and hissed when she bumped his shoulder and she withdrew quickly. "You're hurt!" she gasped.

Harry pulled himself to a sitting position and leaned heavily against the wall. "It's nothing," he muttered weakly. "I'm sorry..."

Rose tried to blink her tears away. "What for?" she asked bemusedly. "You have nothing to be sorry for."

Harry seemed to blink and return to reality. He noticed Rose for the first time and suddenly threw his arms around her, holding her like she was a lifeline. "Merlin, Rose!" he breathed. Rose calmly hugged him back, carefully avoiding his bandaged shoulder. When he finally calmed down, he pulled away shakily. "How did you even get here?"

Rose shrugged, and told him exactly what had happened. "I just wanted to be here, and then..." she made a gesture like an explosion with her arms. "Foof! It was really hot then I was here."

Harry smiled weakly and his eyes began to dim. "I guess we know what your animagus form is..." he said. Then he lost consciousness.

"Harry!" Rose shrieked. She shook him gently but elicited no response from him. Rose was at a loss for what to do. She didn't know exactly how she ended up here but she was pretty sure that she couldn't go back the same way, so she lay Harry down after casting a cushioning charm on the floor. She tried to make him as comfortable as possible while she pondered her next move.

While she thought, she noticed a ring on the floor by Harry. She figured that it was what Harry had sought after by coming here and gingerly picked it up and put it in her pocket. As she did so, she felt dirty, like the ring was trying to invade her. Once she put it in her pocket, the feeling faded, but Rose couldn't forget it. She didn't realize until then just how dangerous the horcruxes were. She unconsciously rubbed her hands together as if trying to clean them while she turned her thoughts back to their current situation.

She nudged Harry again and got no response. It looked like he was going to be dead to the world until she got some help, but she wasn't sure if there were any wizarding healers in the nearby village of Little Hangleton. Eventually, at a loss for any ideas, she decided to try and teleport the two of them back to the hospital wing in Hogwarts. The problem was that she had no idea how to go about doing it. When she had flamed here she had simply wanted to be by Harry. She had wanted it with every fiber of her being. Maybe that would work in reverse. She just had to make sure that she took Harry with her.

Gently, she took hold of Harry's shirt and closed her eyes and began to concentrate. She focused on the hospital wing and every detail she could think of. Merlin, she had been there enough times to know how many ceiling tiles there were in the ward. Once she had a clear picture, she focused on being there. She wanted, needed for her and Harry to be there and be cared for. Then miraculously and without warning, the two of them were enveloped in golden flames and vanished, leaving a burning and smoldering cottage behind.

(((o)))

Poppy Pomfrey wasn't busy today. Indeed, she was a bit bewildered that she hadn't had so much as a firstie with a cauldron burn, but she wasn't one to look a gift thestral in the mouth. No, instead she decided to enjoy a nice cup of earl grey tea while she organized her potions stock. She was inwardly relieved that she had a day off. With all the emergencies she had faced since the Potter girl had started at Hogwarts, she hadn't had so much as a weekend to herself. That and her potions stock was so disheveled it took her an appalling ten seconds to find most of her potions.

Clucking her tongue, she began to sort her potions how she preferred; alphabetically and by effect. From left to right she organized them from the least severe; mild head ache potions and pepper-up's to the most severe; skele-gro and dreamless sleep. She was about halfway through it when her personal wards alerted her that someone had entered the wing. Most curiously, they hadn't come in through the doors.

She bustled out into the ward proper and stifled a scream. Smoking, singed and huddled in the middle of the room was none other than Rose Potter.

"I really need to work on that," she muttered.

Madam Pomfrey hurried over to the girl and quickly helped her to her feet. She began to check the red head over for injuries. "Dear lord, young lady, what have you been *doing*?" she said.

Rose opened her mouth to reply but didn't have the chance as Pomfrey frog marched her over to a bed; the same bed she stayed in

every time she was admitted into the wing. The nurse was muttering something to herself about no common sense as she forced Rose to sit on the bed and began to check her over. She interrupted Rose every time the girl tried to say something. Finally, she sighed in exasperation. "There is nothing wrong with you!" she snapped.

"Not me!" Rose snapped back, pointing at Harry's slumped form on the floor. "HARRY!"

Madam Pomfrey seemed to come to her senses as she stared at the smoking, bloody form for the boy on the stone floor. "Merlin's beard! What happened to him?" she asked as she levitated him into a bed. Rose stayed mum and Pomfrey looked at her expectantly. "Well?" she asked in exasperation.

"I...I can't say," Rose said softly. "Just make sure he's okay...please?"

Poppy always had a soft spot in her heart for the girl and her stern façade faded. She sighed, "Very well. I'll need you to go fetch the headmaster and-"

"No."

"Pardon?"

"Dumbledore doesn't need to know," Rose said patiently.

"I beg your pardon, but-" Pomfrey began but Rose interrupted her again.

"The last thing Harry wants is for Dumbledore to know that he's here," Rose explained. "I would have brought him to St. Mungos but I wasn't thinking clearly. Please, just treat him so he can go back to Hogsmeade."

Realization dawned on Madam Pomfrey. This was Harry *Evans*, the new face in Hogsmeade and Rose's boyfriend. She thought the boy looked familiar and she could tell how people mistook him for James Potter. "Fine then," she said. "But I want you to go and get some rest and get cleaned up."

“You’ll have to levitate my cold dead corpse out of here before I’ll leave Harry.” Rose growled.

Poppy simply nodded.

“And don’t you dare think of getting the Headmaster involved.” Rose added. “And thank you.”

(((o)))

Harry cracked his eyes open and immediately shut them. The early morning light streaming in the windows burned and agitated his headache. Slowly, he opened them again and squinted up at the ceiling. He recognized the ceiling tiles. He was in the hospital wing. He sighed; even after graduating it seemed that he was still fated to end up here. He took a moment to gather his wits and tried to sit up, only to find a comfortable weight on his chest.

Glancing ‘down’ he noticed that Rose was snoring blissfully, her head pillowed on his stomach. She had his right hand clasped in both of hers and was drooling slightly. Harry smiled fondly. The last thing he could remember was saying some cheeky comment about her animagus form before passing out. He assumed that she managed to get the two of them back to Hogwarts. He took a moment to find out who exactly in the castle knew of his presence.

Hogwarts informed him that she had made sure that Dumbledore was completely in the dark and told him that the only two people that knew were Madam Pomfrey and Rose. Rose had made sure that Poppy wouldn’t tell anyone either. He sighed in relief and the motion woke Rose.

Rose lifted her head from Harry’s torso and blinked blearily. She wiped her wet cheek on the sleeve of her robes before noticing Harry’s amused grin. “Morning, beautiful,” he said cheekily.

“Harry!” Rose shrieked, throwing herself fully onto him. She began to sob and blubber something about losing him but Harry couldn’t make out anything clearly enough.

"Hey, hey now...calm down," he soothed, rubbing calming circles on Rose's back. "I'm fine now thanks to you. How long was I out anyway?"

Rose sniffled and calmed herself down. "Two days," she said wiping her eyes and smiling at Harry. "It's Monday now."

"Have you been here the entire time?" Harry asked. Rose nodded. "Well thank you."

Then Rose's demeanor completely changed. She scowled at Harry and slugged him hard on the shoulder; the uninjured one fortunately. "Don't you EVER do that to me again, Harry!" she growled. Harry had the good graces to grimace. "If you feel like going off on some stupid adventure again, you are taking me, no questions asked."

"Yes dear," Harry said impishly. Rose glowered at him. "Sorry..." Harry then realized that he had forgotten the ring. He began to rummage around in his discarded clothes for his shrunken chest and looked for any sign of the horcrux.

"Looking for this?" Rose asked, pulling the ring from her pocket. Harry breathed a sigh of relief and took it from her. Rose rubbed her hand on her robes.

"Oh thank Merlin," Harry said. "Feels nasty, doesn't it?"

Rose nodded. "Slimy or something."

Harry reached up and brushed a finger over Rose's scar. "It's because of this," he explained. "You can feel the piece of the soul in the ring."

"I don't like it..."

"I wouldn't expect you to."

Madam Pomfrey chose that moment to enter the ward from her quarters and Harry hurriedly put the ring into his shrunken trunk. "I thought I heard voices out here," she said as she fastened the tie on her dressing gown. "How are you feeling Mr. Evans?"

Harry blinked for a moment in confusion before realizing that, of course she would know about him and his alter ego. "I'm doing much better now, thanks to you Poppy."

Madam Pomfrey blushed demurely. "Yes well," she glanced at Rose. "I suppose I should be able to discharge you after a last check up. Tell me, what caused your coma. Do you know?"

Harry nodded. "I was affected by the *concutio* charm," he said. Poppy blanched and hurried to her potions stores while Harry rambled on. "Stupidly I might add. Never thought to check for that stupid charm... Why do they call it a charm anyway? It should be a curse."

"Harry, you're rambling," Rose said.

Harry shut up. Madam Pomfrey bustled back to his bedside and handed him a colorful orange potion. "Drink that," she ordered, and Harry quaffed the potion. "It should relieve the after effects of the charm."

Harry smacked his lips. The potion was really rather tasty; like mangoes. "That wasn't that bad," he remarked.

"It's from my personal stores," Poppy explained. At Harry's raised eyebrow she elaborated. "I flavor all of my potions. I figure that the fouler tasting the potions I give the students, the less likely they'll want to end up here."

"I KNEW it!" Rose blurted. Harry struggled to keep his mirth contained.

"Anyway, think I'm well enough to leave?"

Madam Pomfrey checked him over and clucked in satisfaction. "I suppose so, Mr. Evans," she said. "Just make sure to take it easy on your shoulder for a few days and you should be right as rain. I still think we should inform the Headmaster."

Harry instantly went serious. "No. Please don't. Albus and I won't get along very well."

Poppy sighed in resignation. "Very well then, but I should warn you; the castle has most likely already informed him."

Harry smirked mischievously as he picked his clothes up and took them behind a screen to get dressed. Rose instantly began to fantasize about a nearly naked Harry. "Hogwarts won't tell Albus anything Rose and I don't want her to," he called. He emerged moments later, dressed and ready to leave. "And thank you for caring for me, Poppy."

"Yes, well," Poppy said with a pleased smile. She almost never received thanks. "Just don't go getting yourself hurt."

Harry turned to Rose. "Are you ready to go?" he asked.

Rose scowled in the general direction of the Headmaster's offices. "The old man forbade me from going."

Harry simply smiled. "What he doesn't know won't hurt us, will it?" Rose couldn't help it and smiled back.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Hogwarts will cover for us."

Harry and Rose left the castle undetected and headed toward the village. Harry put his arm around the slight girl's shoulders and held her close. He owed her a life debt now, but it was one he would gladly repay. They walked in silence for most of the way there before Rose spoke.

"I took the Sword of Gryffindor from Dumbledore's office the other day," she said. "I think I left him in shock."

Harry had to laugh. It wasn't everyday that the normally unflappable Albus Dumbledore was left speechless. "Well, I guess I'll have to teach you how to use it. We can work on it after your animagus lessons," he said.

Rose bounced happily, anxious to tell Harry all her good news. "Oh, and McGonagall told me that I can go to the ball with you."

They walked a bit further before Harry said, "Well?"

"Well what?" Rose asked.

"Aren't you going to ask me to the Ball?"

Rose stopped on the path as a blush crept all the way up her neck.

"Will you go to the ball with me?" she asked quietly.

"I'd love to go with you, Rose," Harry said, beaming at the girl. "I guess we need to teach you how to dance then?"

Chapter 12

Harry had to resist the urge to scowl. Rose was an absolutely horrible dancer. After a restful night, the two of them spent most of the following morning teaching and learning how to dance.

He winced as Rose stepped on his toes again and sighed. Looking back, he distinctly remembered being a much better dancer than his female counterpart was, and even then Padma thought he was a dud. It wasn't until he had visited Austria that he decided to get formal lessons. Harry discovered that he liked dancing. He just didn't like to teach it. That's not to say Harry didn't like teaching, however, since the DA was one of his fondest memories of Hogwarts.

He had to hurriedly catch Rose as she tripped over Harry's leg. He wrapped his arms quickly around her midsection and hoisted her back to her feet. "I'm sorry," she muttered.

Harry sighed again and rubbed his eyes. He was finding it really hard not to snap at the seemingly clumsy girl. "It's alright..." he said as reassuringly as possible. "It just takes a bit to get used to."

Harry took a moment to put himself in the position of being led around the dance floor. Once he was in the mindset he addressed Rose again. "Now, watch me," he said. He stepped back with his right foot, then brought his left foot back and out. Finally he brought his right foot to the left to meet up with his left. "Got it?" Rose nodded.

"Now just remember, if I lead with my right foot, you step backward with your left. All you need to do is mirror my movements," He explained. "Ready to try again?"

Rose nodded and stepped up to Harry. She really didn't understand why she had a hard time understanding a simple waltz. Harry had started her off with a more difficult and faster tango the other day and she had grasped it almost instinctively. She giggled girlishly as Harry placed his right hand lightly on her hip. He smiled and rolled his eyes good naturedly. She really did fancy him, almost to the point of infatuation.

Harry didn't mind though. He still hadn't figured out his feelings for the pretty red haired girl in his arms but he knew that he didn't want to leave her side. Ever.

Rose placed her left hand on Harry's shoulder and the two of them clasped their empty hands. "Now, I'm going to step forward with my right foot," Harry began. "You...?"

"Step back with my left," Rose answered. Harry nodded and they did so and paused.

"Now I step forward and out with my left foot and you...?"

"Step back and out with my right!" Rose said as they did so. "Now we bring our feet together."

"See? It's not so hard," Harry chided. "Now we just finish the box."

They spent the rest of the afternoon with Harry teaching Rose the various different waltz steps; turning, progressive and the lift and spin. Once she had jumped that initial hurdle, Rose learned rather quickly. After a lunch of soup and sandwiches, Rose and Harry collapsed on a couch in the sitting room and simply enjoyed each others company. Rose leaned comfortably against Harry and began to doze when Harry spoke up.

"The castle is in an uproar looking for you."

Rose sat up and looked at Harry. "I thought you said you'd take care of that?" she asked.

Harry smiled impishly at her. "I said the castle wouldn't tell anyone," he said. "There's nothing I can really do about the rumor mill."

Rose moaned pitifully and buried her face in her hands. She knew that saying with Harry for the winter holiday was too good to be true. "I should probably go pack then," she said dejectedly.

"Why?"

Rose looked suddenly at Harry. "What do you mean?"

“Who says they’re going to find you?” He elaborated. Rose blinked and Harry explained. “The staff has already been through the village twice now looking for you. The old man even passed right by the house and didn’t even think about knocking.”

Rose couldn’t help herself and began giggling with mirth. “How?” she asked.

“Simple,” Harry said as if it were the most common knowledge in the world. “The *fidelius* charm.” Seeing Rose’s blank expression he went on. “The *fidelius* charm hides a house or other building from everyone but the secret keeper and anyone they wish to know. I’m the secret keeper, and I told you exactly where the house was when we entered the village Monday afternoon.”

Something dawned on Rose. She remembered Hermione telling her about the charm in her second year. Anyone who wasn’t ‘in the know’ so to speak didn’t even know the charmed building existed. She was overcome with happiness knowing that she was safe here with Harry and leaned back against him again. “Thank you, Harry,” she said softly. “For everything.”

Harry just wrapped his arms around her and enjoyed the crackling fire

(((o)))

Harry and Rose spent the following days to Christmas enjoying their company and decorating the house for the very first time. Harry had never seen Rose so happy as she seemingly floated around and decorated. Harry procured a modest sized tree and set it up in the sitting room. He sat back and watched as Dobby, Winky and Rose had fun decorating the tree. He could definitely tell who had decorated which part of the tree. Rose’s section was actually decorated very nicely with a silver and blue theme to it. Harry attributed it to Rose’s feminine touches. Dobby, unsurprisingly, used nothing but socks and sock themed decorations. Winky elicited the largest reaction from Harry and he laughed for nearly an hour. She tiny elf had decorated her part of the tree with butterbeer corks and strange radish like ornaments that left Harry wondering if Winky was really Luna’s elf.

Once the three were done decorating Harry added his personal touch to the tree. Flourishing his wand, he conjured thousands of gold fairy lights and sent them into the branches of the tree. He also transfigured a muggle pen into a golden spire for a tree topper. All in all, the tree was rather ugly, but neither Harry nor Rose cared. It was their first of hopefully many Christmases together.

The week wasn't all just lazing and fun. After her dance lessons, Harry decided to start teaching Rose about her animagus form. Since the incident at the Gaunt house, Harry had determined that Rose's form was that of a phoenix, like his. She had already discovered her ability to flame travel and Harry focused on that. Rose excelled at it and in the two days before Christmas she had it down to an art. She couldn't transform anything yet, but Harry hadn't expected her to. It took him nearly half a year to perfect his transformation.

While they worked, Rose asked Harry about his second transformation, and if she would have one. Harry told her that it wasn't until after he had exited the chamber in the Department of Mysteries that his second form manifested. He honestly thought it was a 'gift' from Voldemort. Either way, Rose was satisfied for the moment and couldn't resist flaming around the house. She eventually stopped, however, when she flamed over to Dobby in the attempt to scare him, and almost set the tree on fire.

Eventually it was Christmas Eve and after breakfast Harry gave Rose her first surprise. "So, are you doing anything important today?" he asked the bleary eyed girl. One of the few less obvious differences between them was where Harry was a light sleeper and early riser, Rose could sleep the day away if you let her. Harry's sleeping problems manifested in his fifth year when Voldemort would send him visions nearly every night. He prayed that Rose never had to experience that.

Rose blinked sleepily at Harry. "Dun think so...why?"

"I have a little something planned for us," he said evasively. "Once you get ready for the day, we can go."

Rose immediately woke up fully and dashed up to her room. She came back down a few minutes later dressed in a pair of jeans and a

wooly green Weasley jumper. She had her hair pulled back into a loose ponytail and was smiling broadly. "Ready!"

Harry had to tear his eyes away from her. Even as casually as she was dressed, she still looked ravishing. "Okay," he began. "I'm going to flame there first. I want you to concentrate on me and flame there on the count of ten." At Rose's nod, Harry vanished in a burst of blue flame.

Rose counted to ten then concentrated hard on Harry's features. She pictured him standing there in what he was wearing; oddly enough almost exactly what she was but with different colored jeans. She started adding in features, his sparkling green eyes, his messy hair and handsome face, chiseled...

Rose had to stop for a moment. She was getting her self flustered. Taking a deep breath, she focused on Harry again then willed herself to be by him. She too vanished in a burst of flame, hers golden. She reappeared in a lavish entry hall and staggered. She had put too much power into the teleport and nearly ended up sprawled on the polished cherry wood floor, but Harry's reflexes were top notch as always and he steadied her with his arms around her waist. She blushed and glanced at him gratefully. "Where are we?" she asked. Judging by the size of the entry hall, the place must be huge.

With a flourish of his arm and a bow, Harry said, "Welcome to Potter Manor."

Rose looked gobsmacked. She was in her family's ancestral home. She had heard about it in passing when she actually managed to stay awake in Binns' class and always wondered about it. She had thought it to be lost under cloaking wards. She asked Harry, "How did you find it?"

Harry stared at her strangely then nodded in understanding. "You think it was lost, don't you?" He asked. Rose nodded and Harry rolled his eyes. "It wasn't lost at all, just a closely guarded secret."

Rose's expression darkened. "Dumbledore," she growled. Harry nodded.

“Anyway, back to more pleasant things!” he exclaimed in a happy voice. “Let’s go exploring. I’m curious to see if this manor is any different than the one in my old dimension.”

The two of them wandered the vast expanse of Potter Manor. Harry already knew the layout of the mansion so they avoided getting lost. Rose seemed fascinated by the dungeons. They were the cleanest and most welcoming dungeons she had ever seen. It really was rather strange. Eventually the tour came to an end and they plopped down on a very lavish down filled velvet sofa with a couple of butterbeers in hand. Rose nearly moaned with pleasure.

“So, what did you think?” Harry asked.

There was a lengthy pause and Rose said, “It’s clean...”

Harry dissolved into fits of mirth. When he finally calmed down he asked, “That’s it? That’s all you thought?”

Rose sighed. “I liked it but it’s just too...big,” she explained. “I like our home in Hogsmeade better. And why is it so *clean*?”

Harry chuckled again. “I understand. And I think Dobby went a little over board when he cleaned up. He was a bit to ecstatic to return home.”

Rose’s eyes went wide and she blinked. “Dobby...home?”

“How much do you know about house elves?”

Rose adopted a dull face. “Only about everything Hermione knows,” she muttered.

Harry nodded in understanding. Hermione must have started spew. “Okay,” he began. “House elves are bound to a family. They are born into that servitude, and it’s almost sustenance for them. Simply by serving their family, they survive. Now, if a family dies out, the elves become...I guess feral is the best term. Then they slowly die out if they don’t bond with a new family. This brings us back to Dobby. If I remember right, the Potter family had three elves before Mum and Dad died; one of them being Dobby.”

Rose nodded seeing where this story was going but she let Harry continue.

"You and I were too young to continue the family bond and the elves were freed. The other two, I can't remember their names, eventually died, but Dobby simply went a little batty. He somehow managed to survive until the Malfoy family bonded with him. Once we turned eleven, Dobby felt the pull on his weakened bond with the Potter family and eventually sought us out. This is where it gets a little different between the two of us. Only a patriarchal head of a family can reinstate a bond with an elf. You, being female, would never be able to re-bond with Dobby, but he was still loyal to the Potter bloodline."

"I thought Dobby liked being free though," Rose said.

"It was because he was free to serve us. In my case, until I came of age and could reinstate his bond. That's why he was so elated to find out who I really was," Harry explained. "Anyway, one last thing to do here before we go. I don't feel very comfortable here either."

As they got up from the sofa, Rose a little reluctantly, they heard a deep voice from the fireplace mantle. "I never did either," it said. "Bought me some land in Godric's Hollow and build me a nice little house there."

"Hello William," Harry said with a tight smile on his face. Rose could tell that Harry didn't like the portrait much.

Rose turned around with Harry and looked at the portrait on the mantle. The man in the frame appeared to be in his late fifties. He had a soft face with mischievous blue eyes, and Harry's messy black hair that was streaked with grey. She looked up at Harry with questioning eyes.

"Rose," he said. "I'd like you to meet our great-great-grandfather, William Thomas Potter. William, this is Rose Lily Potter, daughter of James and Lily."

William laughed jovially. "Yes, yes, she looks just like her mother," he said. Rose smiled warmly but her smile faded with William's next comment. "She has her mother's wonderful breasts."

Rose squeaked in outrage and Harry whimpered. He had sincerely hoped that the portrait wouldn't be activated here. Back in his dimension, Harry met William on his first visit to the manor and was instantly offended by the portraits crude sense of humor. It was the real reason Harry didn't like the manor. None of the activated portraits could be removed. "Really, that's wonderful," Harry said and Rose turned her indignant glare on him, though this time it was tinged with a bit of appreciation. "But we have things to do, so if you'll excuse us."

Harry frog marched Rose out of the room before William could say anything else. "*He's* the real reason I don't like this place either," he explained to a rapidly reddening Rose. Harry didn't notice that he had one hand firmly on her bum. Rose didn't seem to mind though, and she let Harry keep it there until they got to their destination; a huge walk in closet. At this point, Rose didn't notice the hand on her butt; she was too awed by sheer amount of gowns and dresses before her. "Pick out any one you want for the Ball."

Rose squealed girlishly and disappeared into the forest of cloth. Harry sat down in a lounge that most likely had been placed there for Potter men waiting on their women to finish getting ready. Harry seriously doubted that Rose would be less than an hour in there.

While he sat, he thought about his Christmas present for Rose. He was glad that she hadn't asked about portraits of her parents when William had revealed himself. He had a special surprise for the girl. Harry was interrupted by an indignant scream from deep in the closet. Harry surged to his feet just as a half naked Rose came flying out of the closet clutching a cyan robe to her bare chest. Harry spluttered and turned away. "What's wrong," he asked, pointedly not looking at Rose.

Either Rose hadn't noticed her state of undress or she didn't care. She pointed back into the closet. "He's in *there* too!"

Harry sighed and made his way through the sea of gowns and finally made it to the vanity dresser deep in the back of the wardrobe with Rose following close behind. Sitting on the tabletop was a small picture frame with none other than William Potter in it. The portrait has a wide grin on his painted features as he tried to look past Harry at the half naked girl hiding behind him. "You're really an arse, you know that?" Harry growled.

"What?" William said innocently. "I merely commented that her bum looked rather shapely in that last gown she had on."

Harry palmed his face in his hand and picked up the small frame. He made a quick search of the closet for anymore portraits and, finding none, turned back to Rose. He had forgotten her state of undress and 'eep'ed', quickly averting his eyes. "You...you should be safe now," he stuttered turning to leave. As he did so, Rose couldn't resist getting in a quick jab of her own.

"You realize that you have to let me see you in only your shorts now, right?" She called out to Harry's retreating form.

"You already have!" Harry shouted back, his voice a little higher than normal.

Rose spent another twenty minutes or so in the closet before emerging. She was still red but she looked satisfied as she carried a deep burgundy robe folded in her arms. "How come you didn't let me see you with it on?" Harry asked.

"I want it to be a surprise," Rose said sheepishly.

Harry smiled. "At least you're letting me see the color," he said. "That way I can coordinate."

The two of them flamed home and Harry secluded himself in his room, leaving Rose to her own devices. The rest of the day passed quickly and before they knew it, it was Christmas. Harry came down the stairs and found Rose already in the kitchen with breakfast waiting. They shared a quiet breakfast of porridge, bacon and toast, before Rose looked up at Harry with wide, doe-like eyes.

Harry knew exactly what she wanted. "Alright, alright...presents," he said with an over dramatic sigh. Rose squealed and ran into the sitting room. When Harry caught up with her, he found her nearly in tears, staring at all the presents under the tree. "What's wrong?" he asked worriedly.

Rose scrubbed her eyes with the back of her hand and smiled at Harry. "This is my first real Christmas and I'm just happy to be sharing it with you," she hiccupped. She hugged Harry then went to sit down next to the pile of presents.

'Women,' Harry thought. He went to sit next to her. He picked up a soft package from Mrs. Weasley and handed it to her. "Let's open yours first," he said. "Then we can open mine."

Rose ripped paper (Rose was a ripper,) from the package and held up an emerald green jumper with an 'R' embroidered on the chest. Wrapped in the jumper was a tin of homemade fudge. Rose smiled and set them aside. She noticed the wistful look on Harry's face. "You miss them, don't you?" she asked.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, but they're here too, so I can get to know them again," he said. "Open your next one." Harry handed her a wrapped box. Harry was pretty sure about what it was and used it as a gauge for the reaction his gift would elicit.

Rose ripped the paper off the box and found a note taped to the lid.

Dear Rose,

I hope you find as much solace in this gift as I did. I found these over the summer and thought you might like them.

Remus

Rose took the lid off of the box and gasped. The box was filled with notes and photos of her parents and the rest of the Marauders from their school days. Rose's eyes misted as she put the lid back on and pushed the box to the side. She would look at it later. Right now she had more presents to open. She accepted the next package and noticed that Harry had an impish grin on his face. She looked back at

the package and noticed it was from Ron. With a sigh, she opened it. Ron had given her a gaudy charm bracelet and most of the charms were hearts. Rose made a face at it and Harry burst with laughter. "I'm glad you find it so amusing," Rose tried to growl, but her own smirk ruined the effect. She tossed the bracelet over her shoulder. "Oops."

Her next two gifts were books; one from Hermione on ancient and lost magic and the other from Sirius on famous pranks. Harry understood the book from Hermione. He would have been a little perturbed if the bushy haired witch hadn't given Rose a gift like that after Rose's display at the first task. It was a book that Harry hadn't seen before and he was itching to read it himself. The other book, *Famous Pranksters of the Modern Century*, made Harry raise his eyebrow at Rose. "Is there something I should know about you?"

Rose giggled. "Not really," she said. "When Sirius and I had the chance to finally talk, he told me that he was happy I was more like Dad than like Mum. I think he wants me to be a Marauder too." She was silent for a moment then added, "I guess I could be now that I know my animagus form. I just need a name."

"Well, I'm Feathers, you could be Featherina," Harry suggested. Rose glowered at him. "Oooor maybe not..."

Rose shook her head. "It's not that important right now. I just hope that Sirius will start treating you like Dad when he finally meets you."

Earlier during the week, Rose had asked Harry if she could reveal him to Sirius and Hermione. Harry was adamantly against Hermione; he was convinced that the bookworm was in Dumbledore's pocket, but he missed Sirius too much to hold out for very long against Rose's puppy dog eyes. They agreed to meet with him come the next Hogsmeade weekend. Besides, Hermione would meet Harry at the Ball.

Speaking of puppy dog eyes, Rose turned them on Harry now. "Where's your present?" she asked.

"Oh no," Harry said looking away. "That won't work on me. You get your presents from me at the end."

“Hey,” Rose said, suddenly changing the subject. “If no one knows where we are, how did you get my presents here?”

Harry looked over at Dobby and Winky. Dobby was happily trying on the two mismatched socks that he had received for his gifts, (Turned out that the only way clothes would free an elf is if they were given with the intent of freedom or unknowingly given. Gifts were just that; gifts.) and Winky had received an art set. She was rather good at sketching Harry had discovered. “House elves are wonderful creatures,” he said vaguely.

Rose nodded and handed Harry a small box. It was her present to him. Harry took the paper off gently (Harry wasn't a ripper) and opened the small jewelry box. He gasped when he saw the simple platinum band with an emerald inlay. “Is this what I think it is?” he whispered. Rose nodded and fingered her matching ring. “Where on earth did you find Guardian Bands?”

Guardian bands were two matching rings that would protect the two people wearing them, regardless of distance so long as they both wore them. They would also allow the wearers to communicate telepathically over any distance. Traditionally they were given as wedding rings, and Harry knew this, even if Rose didn't. He didn't mind though. “I found them yesterday when we were exploring the Manor,” she told him. Harry didn't care that Rose essentially admitted that she didn't have a gift for him before yesterday and he slipped it on the ring finger of his right hand. He was too in awe of the powerful artifacts they both possessed. “I figured that now you don't have to keep renewing your mind link spell...” She blushed and added in a small voice. “And I like the significance of them...”

Harry was overcome with emotion. He scooted over to Rose and kissed her lightly on the lips. “Thank you,” he said softly.

Rose looked confused and pensive as she stared at the ring on her right ring finger. It was more feminine than the one she had given Harry with a smaller band and heart shaped emerald. “What are we, Harry?”

Harry let Rose out of his embrace and scooted away to face her. He thought long and hard about her question. Truthfully, he didn't really

know. He knew that he cared deeply for the young woman and never wanted to leave her. Rose had changed so much from the scrawny, malnourished little girl he had met a few months ago. So had his feelings for her, even though he wasn't sure how. "Family," he eventually answered. "I don't know...more than that even. What do you think?"

"I...I'm not sure. I mean, it's all so confusing. Every time I look at you, I see a brother, a cousin, a...love interest," Rose said quietly, not taking her eyes off the ring. "But, I'm not sure. Every time we kiss, it feels..." Rose gestured vaguely in the air as if trying to grasp the words. "Electric...almost like it's completing something and I always want another."

In the months that Harry had known her, Rose had never been this forthcoming with her feelings. He listened raptly as she spilled the beans, so to speak. "You don't think it's strange to feel that way?" he asked cautiously.

Rose was silent for a moment before looking deep into Harry's eyes. "Yes, I do," she said. "Everything I know tells me that feeling this way about you should be wrong, but I don't care."

"So, what do *you* want?"

Rose blushed and found her pajama bottoms very interesting. "I'd like to try it...I-if you do..." She suddenly found herself in Harry's strong arms.

"Good," Harry whispered in her ear. "Cause I do."

The two of them had their first snog; one that wasn't influenced by hormones, adrenaline or the rumors of classmates but by their love for each other. When it ended, Rose felt giddy and she snuggled into Harry's chest. She wasn't sure that what she was feeling for Harry was love, but she never wanted it to end.

Harry pushed her away gently. "Now, how about my presents?"

Rose nodded absently. She didn't think she could get anything much better than what she just received. Harry handed her a small box,

about five inches long and an inch wide and tall. It was made of mahogany and hinged along one of the edges. She had absolutely no clue as to what was in the box so she simply opened it. Sitting on a red silk cushion was a tiny four and a half inch long Firebolt. Rose looked at Harry in confusion.

"Well, take it out," Harry prompted. Rose held the twig sized broom between her thumb and forefinger. I really was a rather nice replica. "Now, say 'enlarge' in parseltongue."

Rose imagined that the broom was a tiny snake and hissed at it. There was a pop and the broom was suddenly the normal size for a riding broom. Her eyes widened in realization. Harry had bought her a Firebolt! Rose squealed happily and hugged Harry again. "Thank you!" she hissed, forgetting to speak English in her excitement.

Harry laughed and hissed back. "You're very welcome. If you hiss shrink at it, the broom will become pocket sized again," he explained. He watched as Rose re shrunk her broom and he switched back to English. "Now, for your real gift."

Rose looked up wide eyed at Harry. "You already bought me the most expensive broom in the world!" she exclaimed. "What else could you possible have gotten me?"

Harry stood and left the room for a moment before returning with a picture frame in his hands. If he had gotten her a picture of William Potter she was going to kick him in the bludgers. She accepted the frame from Harry and realized that there were actually two frames, stacked on top of each other. She turned them over and her breath hitched in her throat. Harry had given her a portrait of her mother and father.

She nearly dropped the portraits in her shock so Harry took them from her gently. "Harry?" she questioned with a shaky voice.

"They haven't been activated yet since no one was around after they died," Harry explained in a soft voice. "The Potter family has an enchantment in the manor that creates a new portrait anytime someone is brought into the family. The portrait 'grows' with the person until they die, then the family activates the portrait." Lily's

portrait was created the day she and James were married. "These two should know who you are. Want me to activate them?"

Rose nodded quickly and eagerly, unable to stop the tears from flowing. Harry knew enough by now that they were happy tears. Separating the two frames, he set them upright on the couch and began to weave the runes that would bring Lily's portrait to life. Slowly, like she was being wound up, Lily came to life. She blinked a few times before her eyes settled on Harry.

"James? Oh my god, I'm dead aren't I?"

Harry smiled sadly. "Unfortunately, yes, you're dead, and no, I'm not James."

Lily was always a quick one and after a few seconds studying Harry, she had an idea who he was. "Is your name Harry?" she asked hesitantly. Harry smiled fondly at his 'mother' and nodded. "If we had had a boy, we were going to name him Harry after James' great uncle. Speaking of James...?"

"I was just about to activate him," Harry explained. Lily's eyes welled up with tears. "In the mean time, I think there's someone here who would like to meet you."

Harry moved to James' portrait and began to weave the activation runes and let Rose step forward. "Rosie?" Lily asked. Rose was too choked up to say anything and merely nodded. "Merlin, you've grown."

Harry tuned the two women out while they chatted and cried to each other while he finished James' portrait. When he was done he beckoned Rose over while James came to life. His reaction was similar to Lily's but backward. He blinked and gaped at Rose. "Wow, Lily, you look good!"

Lily growled from her frame. "I'm over here you prat!"

James looked back at his daughter. "Rosie?" he gasped. Then he sighed. "I suppose we have a bit of catching up to do..."

Harry stepped over to Rose and hugged her tightly. "I'm going to let you catch up," he whispered into her ear. "If you need me, I'll be in the potions lab."

With that, Harry left the red head to tell her story to her parents.

Chapter 13

At six that evening, Harry and Rose flamed up to the castle with their invisibility cloaks. Together they snuck into Gryffindor tower Harry made sure that Rose made it up to her dorms without incident before making his way back to his house. He took his time getting ready seeing how he didn't have to be back to the castle for the Ball before 7:30. The first thing he did was take a relaxing shower.

While in the shower Harry took some time to organize his thoughts. He hadn't done his Occlumency exercises since before he was pulled between dimensions and his mind was in dire need of it. The first and foremost thing on his mind was Rose. He didn't want to admit it, but Christmas day had shaken him to his very core. They were a couple now, and Harry had no idea how to proceed. When he had first arrived here, he had assumed that Rose was just like he was, only female. But that assumption was crushed not too much later. They may occupy the same niche but Rose couldn't be more unique.

Beyond the obvious; Rose's feminine quirks, they had minor differences. They both played quidditch, but where as Harry was a seeker, Rose preferred chaser. Harry excelled at curses and charms. Once Rose understood the intent behind it, she began to excel at transfiguration. Rose had made some progress with her animagus transformation. In just a week, she had managed to sprout sparse plumage over her body. They were both phoenix animagi, but where Harry was white with blue and gold tipped feathers, Rose's feathers were gold that faded to orange then red. She had a more normal coloration than Harry did.

The list went on...

Rose had a temper. Not just once a month, (sorry...) but constantly. Harry loved her dearly but felt like he had to walk on eggshells around her. Harry didn't start to become sullen and snappish until his fifth year but that was because of the reawakened link between himself and Voldemort. Harry supposed that it was simply that Rose took more after her mother than Harry took after his.

That was the other thing; Harry had taken to thinking about the two of them as coming from different parents. There were enough differences between the two of them that he could only assume that their parents; while being technically the same people were different. Regardless, Harry sorted all the thoughts and memories about Rose into her own 'folder' in his mind.

Once Rose was out of the way, Harry moved on to his, in his opinion, shoddy performance in acquiring the last two horcruxes. Never, since Voldemort's defeat, had he been so lax and careless. He hadn't fallen to just one trap, but two, and nearly lost his arm in the process. Then, to top it all off, Rose had to save him from the last one. Harry shook his head and vowed to restart his training. Voldemort might be weaker than he was, but Riddle was no slouch either.

Lastly, as the water began to cool, Harry turned to his presence in this dimension. Why was he here? In all his experiences with magic, if he learned one thing it was that magic always had a purpose. Something, or someone, had brought him here and Harry was determined to find out. The problem was, who and why? Harry didn't know where to start.

Harry turned off the faucet and towel dried himself. Wrapping the towel around his waist, Harry went into his room and pulled his dress robes from the closet. His robes were simple, but fashionable. They were a rich goldenrod that would go well with the maroon of the robe Rose had selected for herself. Harry was vaguely aware that he and Rose were Gryffindor colors and enjoyed the irony of it all. The two heirs of Gryffindor. Harry took a moment to smooth out some of the silver piping on the robe before donning it. He ran his fingers through his hair to get it to lay in some general direction; he still couldn't get it to cooperate without magic, and his fingers left slight gold highlights.

The last touch he made was charming gold flakes in his green eyes before putting on his shoes and flaming to the castle.

(((o)))

Harry glanced at his watch for what seemed the millionth time that night. It was 7:45. Rose was supposed to meet him in the entrance hall fifteen minutes ago but she was late. Harry never was one to

understand women. It had taken him, even with the Occlumency exercises, only twenty minutes to shower, dress, and charm himself ready for the dance. He couldn't understand what was taking her so long. All she had to do was put her gown on, style her hair, make up...

Ok, maybe he could understand why she was late. But still, Harry didn't think she needed all that. She was beautiful enough without a fancy hair-do and make up.

While Harry was pondering all this he felt someone approach him from behind. While he knew that this moment was coming, he still dreaded it. The person behind him was the last person on earth he wanted to deal with right now. "Hello, Albus," Harry said levelly. "What can I do for you this fine evening?"

Harry didn't hate the old man. Far from it actually. He just didn't trust the Headmaster to make the correct decisions. Albus Dumbledore always subscribed to the 'for the greater good' approach. How Harry hated that term. It was what had doomed both him and Rose to terrible lives with the Dursleys. Harry had no clue why Dumbledore thought that the best thing for the two of them had been to place them with muggles who hated magic. Nor did Harry understand why Dumbledore had kept his and Rose's heritage from them despite how much better it would have made their lives. But even through all of that, Harry didn't hate the man. He felt that Dumbledore was a wise, if barmy grandfatherly figure and he was truly crushed when Dumbledore died.

"I see that you already know who I am," Dumbledore remarked with a pleasant smile. "You must be the young Harry Evans. My, the rumors certainly were true."

Harry knew the rumors. That he looked like a young James Potter. They made sense, seeing as he was the only son of a James Potter. Still, Harry decided to push back and see how far the Headmaster would bend. "Oh?" he asked nonchalantly. "What rumors would those be?"

Dumbledore waved his hand about in the air as if clearing it. "Oh, nothing of importance. You simply remind some people of a former student of mine."

"James Potter?" Dumbledore's eyes widened slightly and he nodded. "Yes, I get that a lot. And no, I'm not related to him." Harry could see the gears turning behind Dumbledore's eyes as he processed Harry's last statement. Harry never was a good liar, and he hoped that Dumbledore wouldn't see through his for a while at least.

The two of them stood there silently and a smug look grew on Harry's face at the rare look of impatience on Dumbledore's. Harry could only imagine that Dumbledore hoped that Harry was a naïve little boy that would spill the beans without any prompting. Harry began to count in his head, waiting for the moment when Albus would crack. He managed to make it to 37 before Dumbledore said, "So, tell me a bit about yourself. You seem to be quite the mystery around Hogsmeade."

Direct and to the point, Harry thought. Normally Dumbledore would double-talk and drop innuendo to trick people into saying exactly what he wanted them to say. It seemed that this Dumbledore was either a bit more impatient than the one he remembered or Harry was simply that frustrating. Harry hoped for the latter. "Let, see..." Harry said, trailing off like he was thinking. "I'm male, I stand five foot eleven, I weigh about sixteen stone..." Harry noted with some amusement that the twinkle vanished from the Headmaster's eyes. He decided to drop the old man a bone. "I moved into Hogsmeade about three and a half months ago."

The twinkle returned full force; Dumbledore had obviously thought he managed to get something from Harry. Actually, Harry simply regurgitated something that most people knew already. "I find life stories fascinating," Dumbledore said happily. Harry assumed that it was meant as encouragement to continue but Harry had noticed Rose waiting at the top of the stairs.

"I'd love to continue this chat, Headmaster, but fortunately for me, my date is here," Harry said. He turned away from Dumbledore without waiting for a return and faced his date.

Harry's breath caught in his throat as Rose descended down the steps, her heels clicking on the stone. Harry hadn't had the chance to see the gown she had picked, only the color, but he felt it was more than worth the wait. The gown hugged her torso and hips but was flared gently past her thighs, the hem barely brushing her ankles and showing off her matching red pumps. It was low cut in front, revealing enough cleavage to entice without seeming garish. Rose had her hair styled in an elaborate knot on the back of her head and had just enough makeup to accentuate her already delicate features. In short: she was gorgeous.

Harry stepped up to the foot of the stairs and held an arm out for Rose to take. "Wow," he breathed. "You look breathtaking."

Rose blushed demurely. "Thank you," she said softly. "You look rather dashing yourself. I'm sorry I was late."

"Well, it was more than worth the wait," Harry said. Rose blushed again and Harry could tell that the girl hadn't ever had the chance to dress up. She didn't know how to take a compliment very well. "What took you?"

"I couldn't get my hair right," Rose said. "Eventually Lavender and Parvati took pity on my and helped out. They did my makeup without me even having to ask."

Harry chuckled softly. "I'll have to thank them then."

The two of them continued chatting amiably when McGonagall called the champions over to her. Harry and Rose walked over and Harry nearly laughed at the look of shock on the transfiguration professor's face. McGonagall was almost as hard to shock as the headmaster, but she seemed transfixed by his appearance. "Professor," Harry greeted. "You're looking lovely tonight."

Harry struggled to keep the shock from registering on his face. McGonagall actually blushed! He could die now a happy man. From the look on Rose's face, she felt the same way. McGonagall smiled at Harry. "Thank you Mr. Evans," she said. "It's nice to finally meet you."

"Likewise."

Harry and McGonagall talked about trivial things for a bit while they waited for the Durmstrang and Beauxbatons students to enter the hall. Harry happily told her that he learned from the best transfiguration teacher ever, and Rose snorted. McGonagall looked reproachfully at Rose and was about to say something when Rose gasped. She had just spotted Hermione at the top of the stairs. Hermione was dressed much like before, her periwinkle gown exactly like Harry's own ball. Harry noticed a guarded look of jealousy in Rose's eyes.

"She's...beautiful." Rose said, the jealousy tainting her voice.

Smiling benignly, Harry gave Rose a gentle nudge. "If you think she's beautiful, you didn't look in the mirror long enough."

The comment diffused Rose's unwarranted envy and she left Harry's side to go talk with her friend. Harry looked back over to McGonagall and noticed that the teacher was looking at him strangely. Harry raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"It's nothing," McGonagall offered. "I just had the strangest sense of déjà vu." Harry figured that he must have repeated something James told Lily. It wasn't the first time he had done that, and it wouldn't be the last.

Soon, the other champions arrived; Fleur with Roger Davies and Cedric with Cho and they all made their way to the champion's table. Rose made sure she sat next to Hermione so they could continue their hushed conversation and Harry ended up next to Roger, who was nodding stupidly at everything Fleur had to say. Harry laughed to himself. Something's just couldn't be changed.

Harry noticed that Krum seemed more sullen than usual, most likely because Hermione was ignoring him in favor of chatting with Rose. Harry nearly snorted his goblet of wine when he heard Rose whisper, "I still say my date is better with his broomstick..."

"You knew?!" Hermione exclaimed. Rose nodded. Hermione took a good long look at Harry, who seemed uncomfortable under her gaze. Then Hermione smiled knowingly at Rose. "You landed yourself a nice one."

Harry looked over at Cedric and Cho who seemed smitten with each other. He was glad that Cedric had turned his attentions away from Rose but felt a bit of pity for the oriental girl. The Cedric in this dimension was an ass and Harry wouldn't wish him on Voldemort. He looked briefly back at Hermione who was eyeing him like she would look at a particularly difficult puzzle. Harry tried to ignore her and ordered his food from the menu.

As soon as he said, "Prime rib," the meal appeared on his plate. Taking his cue, the rest of the table ordered their food; Rose ordered the basted chicken breast. As the meal wound down, the conversation turned rather uncomfortable. It seemed that everyone at the table was curious about Rose and her mystery date. **"Remember to stick with the story,"** Harry sighed through their link.

Rose nodded mentally and answered Cho's question. "We met when I was in primary school," she said. "I was on my way back to my Aunt's house when my cousin and his goons cornered me in an alleyway. I had no idea what they were going to do to me, but then Harry showed up and chased them off."

Harry had to give the girl credit. She put all the right inflections in all the right places. If he hadn't known it was made up even *he* would have believed it. "She and I were friends from then on," Harry finished with a warm smile at the girl. Rose looked back up at him and when their eyes met, Harry felt a tingle suffuse his entire body. It felt unnatural. He quickly looked away.

"When did you decide to become a couple?" Hermione asked.

Clearing his throat and trying to clear the feeling still lingering to his spine, Harry answered. "I was home schooled, so I didn't know about magic until much later than even Rose did," He explained. "Once I achieved my magical diploma from my instructor, I moved here to Hogsmeade and found out that Rose was a witch and going to Hogwarts, and then...well...there you have it."

Satisfied with their answers, the others went back to their own conversations and Harry opened the mind link. **"Rose, did you feel that?"**

Rose nodded. **“What was it?”**

“I don’t know, but I intend to find out...”

Rose was filled with a sense of love for Harry. She had assumed that when he looked away that something had frightened him, and he was going to break it off. She felt silly now. Harry wouldn’t let something as trivial as a strange feeling run him off. She grabbed his hand under the table and he squeezed it reassuringly.

Soon, the lights dimmed signaling that the dance proper was about to begin. The champions and their partners made their way to the now clear dance floor and took up positions. The first dance was a traditional waltz, and now Rose understood why Harry had focused on waltzing more than any other dance style. Both she and Harry thought the Weird Sisters playing a waltz was odd though.

Harry could almost feel Rose’s nerves through their clasped hands. “You’ll do fine,” he said gently. “Just remember, one, two, three and follow my lead.”

As soon as Rose nodded, the music started. It was an upbeat $\frac{3}{4}$ time and they began to dance around the floor. Rose smiled up at Harry and him back at her. She was having fun. They didn’t notice that they were leading the other champions or the looks from the rest of the student body. They were excellent dancers. Once they set the rhythm the rest of the students joined in with their partners. Harry and Rose finished the waltz and went back to their table, laughing and panting from the dance.

They sat at the table, enjoying each other’s company and Harry looked at Rose. “Rose, look me in the eyes again,” he said. Rose did so, but neither of them felt the shock that they felt earlier. Once again Harry wondered what it was.

As the night went on, it was inevitable that they encounter some of the less favorable people in the school. Draco came over, looking much like a vicar and brought Pansy with him. “Well, Potter,” He sneered. “Looks like you found a date fit for a mudblood.”

Harry was about to say something but Rose beat him to it. "At least I didn't have to go to a dog pound for my date, Malfoy," she spat back. Pansy huffed and dragged Draco away before he had the chance to retort.

Harry looked impressed. "That was sharp, Rose," he complimented. "Nice."

Rose stuck her nose up in an exaggerated imitation of a noble. "If he can insult my date, I can insult his," she sniffed haughtily. "Besides, I knew you wouldn't let it offend you."

Then, sure enough, Ron decided to try and ruin their night. He approached the table and glowered at Harry. "So you're the reason I don't have a date!" he accused. "What did you do to her? Bewitch her?"

Harry could only blink at the accusation. Ron was the last person he would have thought would blame him for stealing his girlfriend. He had no idea that Ron had any feelings beyond platonic friendship for Rose. Sure, he had given her a charm bracelet for Christmas, but Rose was a girl. Harry sat there in a stupor while he listened to Ron make an ass of himself. Finally he couldn't take it anymore and snapped. "Shut up, Weasley!" he growled, standing up. Ron flinched as Harry's magic made itself known. "You lost your chance when you blamed her for putting her name in the goblet. If you could look past your bloody jealousy, you would have been able to see that Rose is loyal. More loyal than you'll ever be." Ron looked affronted but before he could say anything, Harry beat him to the punch. "Get out of my face," he commanded.

Ron walked away, compelled to leave Harry and Rose be. Rose looked sideways at Harry. Where she wasn't exactly opposed to what Harry had done, she didn't think he had to be so harsh and she told him so.

"If I wasn't harsh with him, he wouldn't have left us alone," Harry said his voice a bit sad now. He remembered his own falling out with Ron and still missed his friend dearly. Sure Ron had been a jealous prat, but up until his defection, he was as loyal as could be. "Remember what happened in my dimension," he added in a whisper.

Harry and Rose got up for one last dance, requesting something they could dance a tango to, and once again wowed the watching crowd with their skills. Once they were finished, they returned to the table with a flushed and excited Hermione. She was positively glowing as she gushed about how wonderful Krum was. **"I still wish we could tell her,"** Rose said through the link.

Harry mentally shook his head. **"We can't and you know it,"** he chided.

"Why not?" Rose whined and Harry was reminded that she was still just fourteen years old, despite how mature she acted.

"I don't think it's a good idea, Rose," Harry said cautiously. He was even surer now that Hermione was keeping an eye on them. **"She's been watching us constantly all night, listening for either of us to slip up and say something that would give the old goat a clue."**

"Maybe she's just curious," Rose offered, but didn't sound too sure.

"Maybe," Harry conceded. **"Tell you what. Let's see how Sirius takes the news. If he takes it well, we'll think about letting Hermione know."**

It was all Rose could hope for. Finally the night came to its end. Harry left to get the two of them one last drink from the dregs of the punch, and left Rose with Hermione. Krum had long since gone back to the ship for the night. The two girls were comparing how their nights went when Dumbledore confronted Rose. If he couldn't get answers from Harry, he would from Rose.

"Good evening Ms. Potter, Ms. Granger," he offered amiably, his eyes twinkling. "How are you two doing? Enjoy the dance?"

Rose immediately went on guard and erected her feeble Occlumency barriers. She could only hope they were strong enough to keep the old man out until Harry could come to her rescue. "Can I help you, sir?" Rose asked tightly.

Hermione watched the exchange wide eyed, fearing the coming confrontation.

Dumbledore sighed. "Very well then, on to business," he said with no twinkle. "I need to know where you've been staying this holiday."

Rose looked like a deer caught in the headlights. She had no idea what to say. Did she dare try to lie to the Headmaster? "Um...uh...you see..." she stuttered.

"It's none of your business," Harry said. He had returned with the glasses of punch and Rose thanked him for the rescue through the link.

All traces of the grandfatherly figure vanished from Dumbledore's visage and suddenly everyone left in the great hall could feel his commanding presence. "Mr. Evans, as long as she is a student at this institution it is indeed my business," he said. Everyone in the great hall flinched at the old man's aura and looked at the argument. Harry, however, wasn't cowed.

He simply glared back coolly. "I thought you would have picked up on my hints earlier this evening," he said softly. His magic was equally as commanding as Dumbledore's. There was so much magic in the air that Rose and Hermione had to back away from the two angry wizards. "It. Is. None. Of. Your. Business. Besides, you won't be able to do anything come the end of the hol's."

"And just why would that be?" Dumbledore growled.

Harry smirked slyly. Now for the trump card... "You know as well as I do; and now Rose does, that she could be emancipated any time she wants," he said loudly enough for the people around to hear. Dumbledore's face paled and Harry went on. "Expel her if you want. I'll simply resume her lessons with a private tutor; one that won't try and kill her every year."

With that, Harry left a speechless Headmaster in the middle of the floor and returned to Rose's side. "Ready to go home?" he asked. Rose nodded and Harry bid goodbye to Hermione before the two of them vanished in a flash of fire.

Dumbledore stood there in shock. Once again, Harry Evans had managed to mess things up, and both he and Rose managed to apparate through the wards. With a weary sigh, Dumbledore sagged and looked his age. He had come to a difficult decision.

It was time to reassemble the Order of the Phoenix.

Chapter 14

Albus Dumbledore paced back and forth in his office while he waited for his order members to show up.

He had his first meeting with the mysterious Harry Evans the night previous, at the Yule Ball, and what little he had discovered disturbed him. Harry had all but brushed the headmaster off at their first meeting before the dance, using vague and sarcastic answers to Dumbledore's first question. Normally, Dumbledore would be the one to be vague and mysterious, and the fact that someone was using his tactic against him irritated him. Once he had tried the direct approach, simply asking Harry to say something about himself, Harry simply confirmed the already known fact that he was living in Hogsmeade. Albus was instantly elated, thinking that his subtle legillimency suggestions were working, but then Harry excused himself to meet with his date.

Frustrated, Dumbledore resumed his job as a chaperone, all but ignoring the rest of the students in favor of keeping an eye on Rose and Harry. When Harry had excused himself, Dumbledore had cast a discreet listening charm on Harry's back, but frustratingly enough, Harry had somehow discovered it and dispelled it.

Still, Dumbledore wouldn't be dissuaded and he watched the young couple from afar. Harry seemed to get along wonderfully with the rest of the champions and their dates, but he noticed that Hermione seemed distrustful of him. Perhaps he could use that to his advantage. He initially suspected that Harry used some sort of influence charm to sway people toward him, but he didn't feel any magic from the boy and discarded that idea.

His next plan of action was to confront Rose when she was separated from Harry's side, but it seemed that the moment he decided to approach her, Harry would appear out of nowhere. Finally, by the end of the night, Harry had left to get them some drinks and Albus took his opportunity. He finally managed to corner the young girl and noticed that she had some skill with Occlumency. It wasn't enough to keep him out, but more than enough to alert her should he try prying

into her mind. He instead tried to be congenial with her, and simply asked her how she was doing. She responded in a very cold manner and Dumbledore then tried the direct approach again.

But, once again, Harry had frustratingly come to her rescue. But the confrontation had not been without its bright points. He had found out that Harry was a very powerful wizard when Harry had ignored his commanding presence. Indeed, he had countered with his own equal, if not more powerful aura. Then, he proceeded to threaten the Headmaster and then to the old man's shock, the two of them apparated; or what appeared to be apparation, right through the wards.

Dumbledore now knew his course of action. Harry was dangerous, and he needed to find out more information on the young man. Dumbledore was certain that Harry wasn't a death eater; he could feel the dark marks on anyone in the castle, but he was still a wild card. Dumbledore needed Rose to be a certain way; detached, weak...pliable. And if Harry was changing her, it would, to coin a muggle phrase, throw a wrench in the gears.

Dumbledore's mental tirade was interrupted when the fireplace in his office flared green and the first order member stepped out. Unsurprisingly it was Moody, and Albus nodded to him before sitting behind his desk. Before long, most of the order had shown up. To be honest, Dumbledore was surprised at the turn out he received. Only a handful of the members had ignored his call. Once the gathered members had settled, he began the meeting.

"Welcome, my friends," he said. The rest murmured a greeting; most of them wondering why, without the threat of Voldemort, Albus would bother to reassemble the order. Almost as if that were a spoken question, Dumbledore answered. "You all may be wondering why exactly I have called you here. The answer is thus; I feel there may be a new threat looming on the horizon.

"While it is no secret that I do not believe Voldemort to be truly gone, this meeting is not about him. Recently, a young man has moved into the nearby village of Hogsmeade. You may have heard of him; Harry Evans." There was a collective murmur through the group of about

twenty people, most of them wondering if Dumbledore had finally succumbed to senility. But Dumbledore continued as if he hadn't heard them. "I have a few reasons to suspect this young man. First and foremost is his apparent interest in young Ms. Potter and Ms. Potter's drastic personality change in the last four months.

"The second reason is when I investigated his background; I found nothing on any Harry Evans. It is as if he does not exist. His physical appearance is also eerily similar to that of the late James Potter, save his eyes. Lastly, he is a very powerful wizard," Dumbledore said this very gravely. He knew just from his encounter the previous night, that Harry could be dangerous if he was truly dark. Dumbledore knew that he was an equal match for Voldemort, but the overall feeling he gathered from Harry was that Harry was much more powerful. He told the order such then concluded with, "Are there any questions or comments before I give out the assignment?"

Immediately, Minerva McGonagall spoke up. "I can understand why you'd be nervous about him, Albus, but really; assembling the order to investigate a boy?"

"And I can understand your concerns, Minerva, but I would rather find out if he is a threat. I am more worried about Rose's safety than anythi-

McGonagall cut him off. "Rose's safety is the last thing you should be worried about!" she exclaimed. "I spoke with them at the Ball and the only thing I could tell was that they were very much in love." She paused. "And they reminded me of James and Lily...eerily so."

Sirius spoke up. "I agree with Minnie," he said. McGonagall glowered at the use of her nickname but let Sirius continue. "When I last saw Rose, at the first task, she looked better than I'd ever seen her. It seems to me that this Harry guy is doing nothing but good for her." Remus nodded enthusiastically.

"I agree with Rose looking better," Dumbledore conceded. "But, her personality change is what concerns me more. She used to be meek and kind. Now she is headstrong and rebellious."

"She's a teenager, Albus!" McGonagall said. "She is going to be headstrong and rebellious." Dumbledore looked like he wanted to argue, and McGonagall knew what he was about to say and interrupted him again. "She's not her mother, Albus. She's not her father either."

"I don't trust him," Moody growled.

"You don't trust anyone, Moody," Kingsley Shacklebolt said from his seat with a chuckle.

Moody snarled at the black man. "With good reason! But this Evans boy, he's shift. He's hiding something."

Dumbledore nodded at the grizzled ex-auror. Finally someone that agreed with him. "Either way, I want him investigated. Keep an eye on him-"

"And how do you expect us to?" Remus said. "We don't even know where he lives. All we do know is it's somewhere in Hogsmeade and none of the villagers know either!"

Dumbledore was getting tired of being constantly interrupted. "Then here is the plan," he addressed the room. "I want three teams of two to rotate shifts watching Hogsmeade. If he lives there, you should be able to track him and get some kind of information. Now; volunteers?"

Kingsley and Tonks both volunteered, as well as Moody when he wasn't teaching classes. Sirius said that he could stay near the village in his grim form and Remus agreed to stick with him. Hestia Jones and Mundungus Fletcher; who had miraculously shown up, both volunteered as well. Dumbledore wasted no time setting up shifts. Kingsley and Tonks would cover the morning from 6am to 2pm, Hestia and Dung would cover from 2pm to 10pm and Remus and Sirius would cover the remaining eight hours. Moody would step in whenever he could.

Dumbledore called the meeting adjourned, and Sirius approached his desk. Sirius looked pensive. "Yes, Mr. Black?" Dumbledore asked congenially.

“Rose and Harry agreed to meet with me this coming Hogsmeade weekend,” he said. Sirius felt like he was betraying Rose by telling the old man this, but as Dumbledore said; Rose’s safety was paramount. “I could try and ask some questions, but I’m not going to push her.”

Dumbledore nodded. “Very good, Sirius. See that you try.”

And with that, Sirius floored out of the office and back to Grimmauld place. Dumbledore sighed heavily. He hoped he knew what he was doing.

(((o)))

Rose stared warily at the goblin that sat behind the desk. She never liked the horrid little things and often wondered why the wizarding world trusted them to watch over their money. Still, she had to admit that they did a damn good job at what they did, and only complained about it...well...they complained all the time. The only goblin she had any interaction with was a little one named Griphook, and that was back when she was eleven. At the time, she had thought he was somewhat cute, but that opinion had faded over time, when Griphook had muttered something about human females going well with a side of beans and a glass of firewhiskey.

The goblin that she and Harry were dealing with was an older and larger one by the name of Grubfist. This goblin was no better than Griphook had been, and he had a nasty habit of leering at Rose from his seat. Rose had the distinct feeling that she was being appraised and found wanting. Harry, though, seemed perfectly at ease around the goblins, and she tried to take solace in his strength.

“So,” the goblin drawled with a nasty looking smile. “What can Gringott’s do for you Mr. and Ms. Potter?”

Rose’s eyes widened in shock and she looked up at Harry in a panic. She hoped sincerely that the goblin had just made a lucky guess, but she didn’t count on it. Harry put a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“Don’t worry,” He said. “The goblins don’t care who they deal with so long as they get their money.”

Grubfist smiled nastily at Harry and added. "And you do have a lot of money, don't you Mr. Boy-Who-Lived?"

"They also probably know everything," Harry added as an afterthought. The goblin grinned at him. "Cheeky bastards..."

There was a moment of silence while the three simply stared at each other before Harry said, "We're here to see about Rose's emancipation and the reading of the Potter's will."

Grubfist nodded once. "Will you be willing to wait while I contact a ministry representative?" he asked. Harry and Rose consulted mentally for a moment before both nodded. It only took a few minutes for the ministry rep, a man named Joseph Meyer, to arrive and they quickly went on with the will reading. Grubfist cleared his throat noisily and began.

He read, "We, James Michael Potter and Lily Evans Potter being of sound mind and body, hereby bequeath everything we own to our only daughter, Rose Lily Potter." Then he stopped.

Harry couldn't suppress his snicker at Rose's shocked face. "That's it?" she exclaimed. "The will is that short?" Rose had been expecting something profound, heartfelt and sincere that would leave her in tears and give her a sense of closure. Harry finally let out a loud guffaw and Rose smacked him on the shoulder. "It's not funny!"

"Yes it is," Harry said between laughs. He had much the same reaction at his will reading. He motioned for the goblin to continue and he did so with a sneer.

"Since your parents chose not to will any of their estate to anyone else, they had no reason to dictate a lengthy list of people. Anyway..." Grubfist took out another sheet of parchment and began to read from it. "You have inherited; the equivalent of one million, six hundred twenty five thousand, two hundred seven galleons, four sickles, and thirteen knuts. This is in addition to your current trust vaults holdings of ninety nine thousand four hundred galleons.

"You also receive..." Grubfist proceeded to list of the artifacts, furniture and books that could be found in the Potter vault and Harry

watched with growing amusement at the increasingly dazed expression on Rose's face. He had felt much the same way, and if he and Rose were anything alike, she wouldn't want any of it. Still, it was hers now, and she could do with it what she wished.

"And lastly," the goblin said. "You will receive the house at Godric's Hollow, the Potter Manor and everything in it, (Including the portraits, James wished to note. Rose groaned and palmed her face while Harry laughed.) and the land they both sit on. Are there any questions?"

Here it comes, Harry thought.

Rose was silent for a moment. "What if I don't want it?" she asked.

The goblin raised his eyebrow. He was unable to fathom why anyone wouldn't want this kind of wealth. "It is yours to do with as you wish," he stated simply. "Give it away if you want."

Rose looked up at Harry questioningly and Harry shook his head. "No," she said finally. "I'll keep it."

"Very good," Grubfist said, sounding as if it were anything but. "Now, Mr. Meyer?"

Mr. Meyer, who had been forgotten up till this point cleared his throat and began his tirade. "As the will didn't state what should happen to Rose upon the Potter's deaths, Ministry law dictates that she should be emancipated and declared a legal adult," He said. He pulled a stack of parchment from his satchel and placed it in front of Rose. "If you would just sign these sheets, I can get around to removing the tracking charm on your wand."

Rose looked from the sheets, to Harry then back again. "Shouldn't I read them first?" she asked.

"They're safe," Harry said simply. He had read them himself when he signed them in his dimension. Rose was seemingly satisfied and she quickly put her scrawl on the sheets.

Mr. Meyer gathered them up and placed them back in his satchel before pulling out a small runed wooden box. "If you would simply place your wand in this box, the tracking charms will be cleaned from your wand," he explained. Rose did so with great enthusiasm and with a flash of white light, her wand was now totally hers. Mr. Meyer placed the box back in his satchel and stood to leave. "Will there be anything else?" Grubfist shook his head. "Good day then."

After he left, Harry turned back to the goblin. "I assume we're done then?" he asked.

"Not quite, Mr. Potter," Grubfist said with a nasty grin. Harry assumed he like to cause people discomfort, and he knew what was coming next.

"N-no..." Harry said feebly. "I don't want it."

The goblin smiled nastily. "Ah, but Mr. Potter, it is already yours. The moment you stepped into this dimension, the familial magics recognized you as the new head of the Potter family," he said as he pulled out a small engraved box from a drawer in his desk. In the box was the Potter family ring; a simple gold band with the family crest engraved on the surface.

"I already have one..." Harry said weakly. He knew it was a stupid excuse, and so did the goblin.

"Now you have two," he growled. With a sigh, Harry accepted the ring and slipped it on the middle finger of his right hand; his other was on the middle of his left. The ring glowed softly before melding with his flesh and vanishing.

Harry looked down at Rose who still had a shell shocked expression on her face. She was fingering her wand gingerly; as if afraid it would suddenly come to life and bite her. "Are we done here?" he asked the goblin. Grubfist nodded and Harry guided Rose out of his office and out of the bank. Once they were outside, and Rose showed not inclination of recovering from her shock Harry guided her to a bench.

"Rose?" he asked gently.

Rose looked up and into Harry's eyes. Eyes so much like her own. "I'm okay, Harry," she said softly. "It's just a lot to take in; all this wealth, being an adult...you being the head of the family. I guess I would want it more if I had earned it all..."

Harry chuckled softly and pulled Rose into a warm embrace. "I know just how you feel," he said.

Rose opened her mouth to argue but she shut it just as quickly. Harry did know how she felt; he had gone through all of this once already. "Oh yeah," she said sheepishly.

Harry smiled and gave Rose a quick kiss. "Let's go home now. You have some animagus training to do."

(((o)))

Harry staggered down the stairs blearily the next morning. He hadn't slept well that night. It seemed that the will reading awoke some of Harry's nastier memories and they dominated his dreams. He dreamt of Sirius and the veil and of Ron killing Hermione over and over again. Still, Harry was nothing if not stubborn and he managed to eek out a bit of sleep from his ruined night.

Harry walked into the kitchen and looked at the clock on the wall. It was only four am, he noted. Harry put a kettle on the stove and began to heat some water for some tea. While the water began to boil, Harry went into the sitting room and noticed that James and Lily were in the same frame. He didn't know exactly how amorous a painting could get and didn't want to find out. "Oh, sorry," he murmured.

"Harry!" Lily called as Harry turned back into the kitchen.

Harry could hear the panic in Lily's voice and hurried back out into the living room. "What? What's wrong?" he asked.

Lily just pointed at her recently vacated frame. Only, it wasn't empty. Sitting in a chair in the picture was a cheekily grinning William Potter. "Hello!" he greeted jovially.

Harry sighed and put his face in his hands. "How did you get here?" he groaned. He really didn't want to get kicked in the bludgers by Rose.

William looked affronted. "You sound like you don't want me here," he said. Harry just raised an eyebrow at him. "All the portraits from Potter Manor are magically linked. We can go to any frame from there that we wish."

Hearing this, James gave Lily a quick kiss and vacated his frame saying something about hidden rooms at the manor. "Jerk!" Lily shouted after him. "Just leave me here with the pervert why don't you!"

Harry pretended that he hadn't heard anything. "Wonderful," he said to William. "Now why don't you go back?"

The hurt look on Williams face almost convinced Harry that it was a real emotion. "It gets lonely there with only other portraits to talk to," he said morosely. "I-I don't want to be there alone with just the elves anymore."

Harry looked torn. He was a good person and as Hermione once said, he had a 'saving people' thing. On one hand, William was simply a portrait. Portraits have no feelings. But magical portraits were good at conveying them and William was pulling out all the stops. He tried to ignore his heart but in the end the troublesome organ won out. Harry sighed. "Fine. Go back to your frame and I'll come get you," he said wearily.

Instantly the waterworks turned off and William disappeared from the portrait.

"Harry!" Lily chided.

"He might be an arse but he's still family..." Harry said as if he were trying to convince himself. "Besides, I never said when I would go get him."

The kettle began to whistle and Harry went in to fix his cup of tea and make breakfast for Rose and himself. He was humming merrily while he cooked the eggs on the stove.

“So,” Lily said from the living room. “Tell me a bit about yourself.”

Harry didn’t even pause in his cooking. “What do you want to know?”

“Well...everything,” Lily said. “I’d like to get to know my daughters boyfriend...or would you be the son I never knew?”

Harry chuckled. “Just think of me as Rose’s boyfriend. It’s easier on everyone involved.”

“Rose’s boyfriend Harry. Got it.”

“Does that mean you’re ok with me dating Rose?” Harry asked. He felt a bit odd asking permission of a painting, but well, they were magical paintings of Rose’s parents.

Lily laughed from her frame. “It’s not like I could stop you,” she said. “Still, I appreciated the gesture.”

Harry flushed and went back to his eggs. He didn’t want them to burn. There was a lengthy pause before Harry spoke up. “Well, my story isn’t all that different from Rose’s actually. Up until now that is. I never met my older female counterpart from another dimension and fell in love with her.”

“So you are from another dimension...” Lily said wondrously. “I thought Rose was a bit of a story teller but now... Do you know why you’re here or how you’re going to get back?”

“No, I don’t, and I don’t think I want to go back now,” Harry said with a wistful look up stairs. Lily could see that Harry was completely taken with her daughter and her heart swelled with affection for Harry. She knew then that he would never intentionally hurt her.

“Good. Because I think Rose wants you to stay too,” she said.

“Yes...well...” Harry said. Even with his back turned to the painting, Lily could tell he was blushing. His neck had turned red. “I am looking for reasons why I ended up here though.”

“Have you found out anything?”

“....No. Anyway, I assume Rose told you about the tournament?”

Lily affirmed it, and Harry went on with his story. He told her about Voldemort’s return, Sirius’ death and everything up until their portraits had been activated. Harry glossed over the parts that Rose had most likely told Lily already. Lily was a rapt listener and she gasped and cooed in all the right places. Harry felt lighter having told Lily all this.

Harry picked at his breakfast while he conversed with Lily. They talked about insignificant things like the weather, Harry’s quidditch skills and what not until James returned. He looked a bit angry. “William’s prattling on about you bringing him here,” he growled at Harry. Harry nodded and James instantly went whiny. “Why?”

“He would be here anyway...” Harry tiredly explained. “Better to let him have his own frame than constantly be chasing you two out of yours.”

James sighed then turned to Lily. “I found it!” he exclaimed happily. Lily hugged her husband while Harry looked on curiously.

“Found what?” he asked. James looked like a deer caught in the headlights. (pun intended)

“Nothing,” he said unconvincingly.

“James, tell him.”

James sighed and sat down. He knew better than to not trust Lily’s judgment. “The rune chamber is still active,” he explained. At Harry’s bemused look, he elaborated. “At their coming of age ceremonies, the Potter’s traditionally would put the new adult into the rune chamber on the night following their birthday. Over the night, the moonlight would reflect off the runes and...I guess brand the runes into the person’s magical core. Their powers would be amplified

slightly and they may get some strange power. I got the ability to manipulate fire.”

A sudden understanding washed over Harry. The door in the department of mysteries. “Ooooooh. Okay. In my dimension they somehow took it from the manor and brought the entire room to the department of mysteries. I went in there when I turned seventeen,” he said. Then he laughed. “And here they managed to convince me that the room would judge you and kill you if it found you wanting. You just need Potter blood!”

James nodded happily and looked like a kid in a candy store. “So, what did you get?”

A true happy grin appeared Harry’s face. “Oh brother,” Lily muttered.

“Well, my core got supercharged; to the point that my reducto could level Hogwarts if I wanted to.” James’ eyes widened almost comically. “I don’t need a wand anymore, but it still helps to use one. Oh, and I used to think that my animagus form was part of the deal too, but now I’m not so sure.”

“Why’s that?” James asked.

“Because Rose has the same form, just a different color.”

A thick, palpable silence infused the air. James looked like he had just seen a ghost and Lily looked furious. “You’re teaching my daughter to become an illegal animagus?” she asked dangerously.

“She...didn’t tell you?” Harry asked. Lily shook her head and narrowed her eyes at Harry. “Well, you know, what with the whole prophecy and Voldemort thing...I figured it would be best for her to be prepared...”

“You’re lucky I’m a portrait young man...”

“Yes...yes I am.”

“Oh!” Lily suddenly exclaimed. Harry fought the urge to dive behind a couch but James lost his battle and hid behind the chair in his portrait.

"I almost forgot! James, does your uncle still have his portrait in the headmaster's office?"

James poked his head up from behind the chair. "Yeah, why?"

Harry caught on quickly. "I like that idea. We need a spy. Someone who can find out what the headmaster has planned and get back to us." Lily nodded.

James looked thoughtful. "I'll be right back," he said as he left his portrait. He was gone about five minutes before he returned looking happy. "He say's he'll do it."

Chapter 15

Harry was floored by Rose's progress with her animagus form. They resumed their lessons after Christmas and when prompted, Rose managed to nearly transform into her phoenix form. The only real flaws in her transformation were her beak and wings. Harry had trouble on his wings too; he considered them to be the hardest part of the transformation. Still Rose was progressing faster than even Harry did, and Harry had the advantage of being supercharged by the Potter Rune Chamber.

Rose also had the advantage of a constant phoenix companion with Harry and could reference his form any time she needed to. Harry didn't have that luxury since, after Dumbledore's death, Fawkes had left this world with the aged headmaster.

"Ok, Rose," Harry began. "How about we take a break for some lunch? You look knackered."

Rose nodded wearily and followed Harry back into the house. She had initially questioned Harry's logic in practicing outside. For one, it was the middle of winter, and two she rather wanted to keep her transformation a secret from...well...everyone. She understood the logic behind keeping it a secret from those that wanted her dead, or would use the knowledge against her. She also understood the logic behind keeping it a secret from the ministry. After all, an illegal animagus charge carried with it up to five years in Azkaban and up to a ten thousand galleon fine.

But mostly, she was simply selfish. She wanted something that she and Harry could call their own...beyond the obvious. She saw their animagus forms as being the perfect, and perhaps most romantic thing possible beyond getting married. She blushed as her imagination carried that train of thought onward.

But Harry's reasons were sound. Should she managed to complete the transformation, she would be able to fly immediately if she chose, and she was pleasantly surprised to find that the cold didn't bother her at all. Harry told her it was because phoenixes were creatures of extreme temperature, more specifically heat, and because of that

their human bodies would become more resilient against cold and heat as well.

“I still can’t believe that you’re letting Harry teach you how to become an animagus,” Lily’s voice broke through Rose’s daydreaming. “And an illegal one at that!”

Harry couldn’t resist the urge to smirk at the guilty look on Rose’s face. Since Christmas Harry and Rose had gotten to know their parents well, and the one thing Harry noticed above all were Lily’s similarities to Molly Weasley.

They were both doting mothers and loving wives to their children and husbands respectively. They both had fiery tempers and both passed those same tempers down to their daughters. Harry personally thought it had to do with their red hair. The only real differences between the two women was one was alive the other was a portrait.

Lily hadn’t been this caring and smothering back in Harry’s original dimension. Harry attributed it to the fact that here in this dimension, Lily technically had two children, though Harry and Rose didn’t see each other as siblings. It didn’t matter to Lily though, and James by proxy. Harry’s parents just saw he and Rose as closer than normal for siblings.

“What exactly are *you* smirking at Harry James?” Lily snapped.

“Nothing mother,” Harry dutifully responded. Then before Lily could berate him for his cheek he said, “If you’ll excuse me, I need to make lunch for Rose and I. Fish and chips ok?”

Rose nodded at Harry and tried to follow him into the kitchen but Lily caught her. “No you don’t, young lady. Your father and I need to have a little talk with you.”

Once in the kitchen, Harry couldn’t contain his mirth for much longer and finally broke down laughing. He knew what they were going to talk about. His father’s portrait had tried to give him ‘the talk’ when he was finally activated the first time, but Harry managed to teach James a thing or two about the birds and the bees. While James had been impressed by Harry’s knowledge, Lily had been almost disgusted.

Harry called Rose into the kitchen to eat as he finished frying the last fish filet. Rose entered, her face nearly glowing in her embarrassment. "Have a nice talk with Mum?" Harry asked cheekily, as he handed Rose a plate.

"You knew didn't you?" Rose growled, snatching the food from Harry.

Harry simply smiled at Rose as they sat down and ate in silence; Rose eating in a very unladylike manner. "I want to congratulate you on your animagus training," he said after a while. "If you keep this up, I think you might have it down pat in a few weeks at the most."

Rose looked up sharply, her mouth stuffed with potatoes. She ate ravenously after an animagus session. Harry had warned her that the constant transforming took a lot from one's body, and she knew now that he wasn't exaggerating. She took a moment to swallow before speaking. She may be eating like Ron, but she had better manners. "Really?"

Harry nodded. "You're making better progress than even I did when I learned. Then again," he said, scuffing his fingernails on his jumper. "I didn't have Harry Potter as a teacher, so it's to be expected."

Rose laughed and threw a fry at Harry. "You're a prat!"

Harry laughed too and threw a fry back at her and she showed him up by catching it in her mouth with a mischievous grin. Soon, their chips were being used as ammo in their food fight that left them laughing in each others arms. Harry gave Rose a soft kiss when he noticed her eyes droop. "Why don't you go get some sleep," he suggested. "I need to go shopping anyway."

Rose nodded wearily and kissed Harry back before staggering up to her room. Harry watched her go fondly and a little perversely as he stared at her shapely bum. Smiling to himself he then apparated to London to start shopping.

Harry's first stop was actually in muggle London. He needed to buy some groceries. Both he and Rose preferred muggle brands to wizard, and Winky found that she enjoyed cooking with them better was well. So, Harry exited Diagon Alley through the Leaky Cauldron

with a friendly wave to Tom. Tom stared at Harry like he was a complete stranger, which he was technically.

Once in muggle London, Harry hailed a cab. It was then that he noticed that he was being followed. He had no idea who it was but the presence made the hair on the back of his neck stand up. The only other people that made him feel even remotely like he was now were Voldemort's inner circle members. The difference here was, the person, or people following him today didn't feel as black and evil as the death eaters did.

Still, if Mad-eye taught Harry one thing, it was 'Constant Vigilance'. Harry made sure that his path was winding and as hard to follow as possible as he ducked into as many crowds as he could find. Once he reached his destination, the grocery store, he quickly hid behind a display and observed. Sure enough, he hadn't managed to throw his pursuer. He cursed silently to himself as he watched the man.

He looked to be in his mid thirties with a medium build and dark hair and eyes. Rather non-descript, Harry thought. The only reason Harry knew him from Adam was because Harry could sense magic to an extent. He couldn't see auras or anything, but in such a magic devoid environment such as a muggle supermarket, a wizard's power stood out like a sore thumb.

After a few minutes, the man cursed silently and left the store. Harry, realizing that it may be a ruse, followed the man at a distance until he apparated away. Harry finally released the breath he had been holding since he entered the store and went back in to finish his shopping. However, his mind wasn't on it, and he didn't notice that he was picking things up that he didn't need until he saw a jar of pig's feet in his basket.

Frowning in disgust, Harry put the jar back on the shelf and finished his shopping. He needed to think on this latest threat with a clear mind and he couldn't do it while shopping. After he left the store, Harry found a secluded alley and apparated back to his home in Hogsmeade.

While he placed the items in the shelves and cooler, he thought about the man who was following him. He compiled a list of things to find

out. Who was he? Who does he work for? What does he want? Why on earth did the man feel so powerful?

Call it a hunch, but Harry had the distinct feeling that the man had something to do with the sudden spikes of energy that he and Rose felt when they looked at each other. Harry had learned long ago to trust his hunches.

He wasn't sure though, but he would find out. And when he did, he would stop them. Nothing and no one would come between him and Rose.

Ever.

(((o)))

The second term had started and Rose went back to the castle. Rose had immediately clung to Harry like a weepy little girl sobbing about how she would miss him. Harry consoled her as best as he could, telling her that they would still have their morning and evening lessons if Rose still wanted. She enthusiastically agreed.

Thus Rose found herself in the great hall for the welcome back feast. She pointedly ignored the glances that the headmaster was giving her and stared sullenly at her plate. She hadn't been separated from Harry for more than a few hours now, but she missed him terribly. Over Christmas, when they had solidified their relationship into that of something more than friends, she had been ecstatic. It may have been a bit odd, and slightly narcissistic to have ones self as their first love, but Rose was certain of one thing. She loved Harry.

Now she had to suffer, yes suffer, through another term at Hogwarts with all the stares, whispers and backstabbing that was sure to occur without his comfort and support.

Rose realized that she was being a bit mulish, and that she would see him every morning for animagus and sword combat training. He also reassured her that he would be there to support her at the last two tasks as well. But Rose felt that she was entitled to something more. After all, her life sucked, to put it bluntly. She could only hope that her life would be normal after this year was over, and she could

enjoy the rest of her teenage years with her boyfriend. Perhaps get married after she graduated and start a large family of messy haired, green eyed children after she finished her career.

Her daydreams were interrupted by a cold sensation running down her spine. It was the same one she got every time she thought she was being watched. She glanced around the hall, trying to catch anyone observing her. Sure enough, Professor Moody had his magical eye trained on her while he conversed with Professor Dumbledore.

But when the eye swiveled away from her, the feeling remained. She resisted the urge to shiver as she continued looking around the room, but she didn't notice anyone else looking her way.

She was broken from her reverie by Hermione, who was poking her in the shoulder. "What?" Rose snapped, perhaps a little more harshly than she had intended. Hermione flinched as if burned. "I'm sorry," Rose said hastily. She didn't want to jeopardize her still fragile friendship with the bookworm.

"Are you feeling alright?" Hermione asked cautiously.

Rose sighed. "Honestly? No..."

Hermione blinked in shock. Rose never truthfully told anyone that she wasn't doing 'fine'. "What wrong?"

Rose opened her mouth to say, "Nothing," but then thought better of it. Perhaps she could find out now if Hermione was relaying stuff back to Dumbledore. Quickly formulating a plan in her mind, she said, "I can't talk about it here. Meet me tonight in the common room?"

Hermione nodded quickly, overjoyed to finally be getting something from her best friend.

At once, the cold sensation returned and Rose whipped her head back and forth, trying to catch the person who was staring at her. She knew now that it wasn't Moody doing it, as he wasn't even in the hall anymore. She decided then to contact Harry.

“Harry?” she asked. **“Are you there?”**

“Always,” came the happy reply. **“What do you need?”**

“Well, two things actually,” Rose said. **“First thing, I keep getting the feeling that I’m being watched and not by Moody.”**

Harry was silent for a few minutes, and Rose wondered if he closed the link before he said, **“I’m sure you are.”**

“What?”

Harry sighed. **“While I was at the supermarket the other day, I was being followed by a very powerful wizard,”** he explained. Rose could tell that Harry was a bit reluctant to let her know this, and tried not to frown. **“I didn’t feel any malicious intent from him, but he seemed dead set on tailing me for some reason.”**

“Why didn’t you tell me this sooner?” Rose asked worriedly.

“I didn’t want to give you anything more to worry over,” Harry answered meekly.

Rose scowled as best as she could over the link. **“What should I do then?”**

“Just keep a low profile. If you feel like you’re being watched, leave immediately and go find a teacher or something.”

“You want me to tell a teacher?” Rose asked incredulously.

“No, just find one. Preferably McGonagall or Flitwick.”

Rose muttered something about Harry being a hypocrite, unfortunately out loud, and caught Hermione’s attention. **“What?”** Hermione asked.

Rose just waved her off mouthing ‘later’. **“The other thing was, I’m going to find out if Hermione is reporting to the headmaster-”**

“Be careful Rose,” Harry warned.

Rose was a little angry that Harry interrupted her to warn her needlessly but understood none the less. **"I will,"** she said. **"I won't tell her anything she shouldn't know already."**

"Okay then, anything else?" Harry asked. Rose shook her head mentally. **"Have fun in class then; they should be a breeze for you now."** Rose giggled and Harry paused awkwardly. **"I...I love you Rose."**

"Ohhh, I love you too Harry!"

Hermione blinked bemusedly as a huge grin broke over Rose's face. She was truly confused to how her best friend could go from sullen and moody to happy and elated in the blink of an eye. "What's the grin for?" she asked. Rose giggled girlishly which perplexed Hermione even more. Rose was about as tomboyish as possible until she met...Harry. Suddenly the pieces all fit. "How long have you been communicating with him mentally?"

The grin vanished from Rose's face. She should have seen it coming; Hermione was much too clever to not figure it out on her own. But Rose wasn't sure just how much Hermione actually knew. She needed to find out. "Come on," she whispered harshly, grabbing Hermione by the upper arm and dragging her bodily from the great hall.

"Where are we going?" Hermione asked worriedly. Rose ignored her and continued up the stairs to the second floor.

Hermione staggered along with Rose's quick clip until they were nearly to the sixth floor before digging her heels in and wrenching her arm from Rose's iron grip. It was amazing just how strong the formerly slight and scrawny girl had become in four short months. "Rose Potter, I am not going anywhere with you until you tell me where you are taking me," she stated furiously.

Rose stopped and sighed. She rubbed her face wearily before looking at Hermione with a pleading expression. "I'm taking you somewhere that no one can overhear. We have a few things to discuss," she said, turning back to the stairs and continuing her climb.

“Obviously,” Hermione muttered as she followed along.

They eventually reached the seventh floor across from the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy and Rose paced in front of the wall thinking about a secure place to question Hermione.

“What are you doing, Rose?” Hermione asked imperiously. “Are you...lost?”

Hermione trailed off as the door to the room of requirement grew into existence. Rose entered the room and held the door open for Hermione. “Well, come on!” Rose snapped impatiently.

Hermione followed Rose into the room, which had configured itself into something similar to a muggle interrogation room, complete with spotlight, metal table and uncomfortable chairs, making Hermione’s hair stand on end. Rose seemed to be a bit subdued by the room too and she snapped, “I didn’t want to interrogate her! Just ask some questions!” Instantly the room reconfigured itself into a comfortable sitting room with two plush armchairs on either side of a coffee table. On the coffee table there was a tea kettle and two cups along with a plate of scones waiting for the two girls. “That’s better.”

Then Rose went to the door and threw the deadbolt, a curiously muggle deadbolt, and locked the door. “What do you know?” she asked from the shadows of the entryway.

Hermione, honestly confused, sat down heavily in one of the armchairs. “About what?” she asked timidly.

“Don’t ‘about what’ me, Hermione. You know what I’m talking about,” Rose snapped angrily. She then blinked and stumbled over to her own chair and slumped in it. She honestly didn’t know why she was so angry. It seemed that lately her temper had been getting the best of her over and over again. “I- I’m sorry, Hermione...I honestly don’t mean to be so angry.”

Hermione got up from her seat and went to sit next to Rose. The two slight girls easily fitted into the one huge armchair. Hermione put a sisterly arm around the redhead’s shoulders. “It’s okay, Rose. I understand what you’re going through.”

“Do you really?” Rose laughed ruefully with tears in her eyes. “Because if you do, I’d like you to explain it to me.”

Hermione just hugged Rose until she calmed down. “Why don’t you tell me what’s going on? Maybe I can help out?”

Rose sniffed and wiped her eyes. She quickly used what little occlumency she knew to compose herself and turned to face Hermione. “First, I need to know what you know about Harry,” she said seriously.

“Okay,” Hermione said hesitantly. “I know that he is cute and seems nice enough from what I know of him. He lives in Hogsmeade and just recently moved there. He’s rather mysterious and no one knows much about him other than he’s really powerful and teaching you what he knows. Honestly I’m really jealous of you.”

Rose blinked. She honestly couldn’t think of any time that Harry had shown of to anyone other than her. “How does everyone know how powerful he is?”

Hermione adopted her ‘professor’ position. “Hogwarts: a History states that you can’t apparate through the wards, yet they two of you did at the Yule Ball. There was so much power in that apparation that you and he set the air on fire. Then before that, he apparated off the grounds after the first task.

Rose’s lips made an ‘o’ as she thought about this. While Harry may have apparated off of the grounds after the first task, no one else knew about their animagus forms so couldn’t put the flaming teleport together with them. Rose decided to leave it that way. “Okay then, what else?”

“Well, tonight at the feast confirmed for me that the two of you can communicate telepathically,” Hermione went on. “You would always space out and no one knew why, but then when you did it at the dance, I started putting the facts together. Then tonight, when you reacted as you did when I told you what I thought, it confirmed it for me.”

Rose mentally cursed at herself for letting something she thought so trivial slip. She figured that it would be the best course of action to tell the truth...what of it she could. "We'll you're right." Hermione's eyebrows shot up into her hair. "About the mental talking thing...it's a spell Harry knows."

A familiar glint appeared in Hermione's eyes and Rose decided to move on before the bookworm could begin to ask any questions. "What else do you know?"

Hermione paused to think. "Nothing much," she said. "I figured that you'd tell me when you were ready."

Rose nodded. She decided for the direct approach. "Did you tell Dumbledore what you know?"

Hermione's face turned red and she huffed indignantly. "What?!" she screeched. Ok, the direct approach was bad. "How could you think that I would be spying on you!? After what has been going on this year, and finally getting your friendship back, you think I'd jeopardize it on something as stupid as-"

"Hermione, I'm sorry," Rose blurted before Hermione could get going too far. She took the other girl's hands in hers. "There's just...things...I want...need to tell you and I can't if I wasn't certain that you wouldn't go to Dumbledore with them."

Hermione's righteous anger deflated as she blushed looked apologetic. "Sorry," she muttered. "I just...don't want to lose your friendship again."

Rose hugged Hermione. "I know, and I don't want to lose you again either."

"So, what did you want to tell me about?"

Rose chewed her bottom lip as she pondered whether or not it would be ok to tell Hermione anything. She decided to wait until she could ask Harry personally. "I can't tell you here and now," she said seriously. "But I can tell you that Harry isn't who you think he is."

(((o)))

The next two weeks passed quickly and uneventfully, beyond Hermione nearly begging Rose to tell her about Harry. Rose stayed true to herself and didn't bother Harry to let him know about Hermione's loyalty. The Friday night before the first Hogsmeade visit of the term, Rose received a letter from Sirius at dinner. It was a short note, reminding her to be at the Hogs Head tavern at eleven.

The next morning Rose awoke bright and early with butterflies in her stomach. She had every reason to be nervous. She had no idea just how her godfather would accept Harry. As she made her way down to breakfast, her mind was replaying different scenarios with Sirius and Harry. In one, Sirius accused Harry of being a death eater and the two of them dueled to the death in the middle of the tavern. Another had Sirius breaking down in tears from the resurrection of his best friend.

She was so engrossed in her fantasies that she just stared at her empty plate as Hermione sat next to her. She didn't notice that Hermione was trying to get her attention until she felt the other girl poke her in the shoulder. "Huh?"

"Are you feeling alright?" Hermione asked worriedly.

"Oh, yeah."

Hermione's brow furrowed in thought. "Worried about your date today?" she asked.

Rose shook her head. She desperately wanted to tell her best friend what was going on, but she promised Harry that she would let him take care of it. Still, Hermione would most likely pressure her into answering one way or another so Rose decided to bend the truth a bit. "I just had a nightmare last night."

It wasn't too far from the truth. Rose had indeed had a nightmare the previous night in which she was standing in a room and surrounded by mutilated bodies. What was the worst part of the dream was, she knew that it was all her fault. She had killed the people.

Hermione sighed and put some bacon on Rose's plate. "You should still eat though," she said kindly.

Rose smiled at Hermione and nibbled on a strip of bacon. She was glad that Hermione was her friend again. She really had missed the girl's bossy attitude.

Before long, it was time to leave for the village. Hermione opted to stay behind, saying she wanted to get caught up on her homework. So after being viciously jabbed a few times by Filch's probity probe, Rose trekked down the path to the village. Harry had agreed to meet her at the gates to the Hogwarts grounds and walk with her to the Hog's Head to meet her godfather.

Since she had nearly mastered her phoenix transformation, her human body had begun to show the improvements that all animagi show. Sirius had heightened senses of smell and hearing. McGonagall could stay as silent as a breeze and had excellent night vision. Both Harry and Rose however, being magical animagi almost completely assimilated their animal form's abilities into their human forms. They could flame teleport, had enhanced vision, hearing and smell, resistance against extreme temperatures and could almost instinctively fly on their brooms.

So, with just a little squinting, Rose could clearly make out Harry waiting at the entrance to the village, a little over half a mile away. He was dressed comfortably; a pair of black jeans and a blue 'Weird Sisters' t-shirt and was leaning casually against one of the stone warhog statues. He looked up the road toward her and waved; clearly he could see her too.

She quickened her pace and kissed him warmly when she arrived. "Hey gorgeous," he said softly. "You ready for this?"

"Are you?" she asked back. She knew this would be Harry's first meeting with Sirius since Harry's Sirius fell through the veil.

Unsurprisingly, Harry seemed hesitant. "Well...I guess."

Rose knew exactly what Harry was hesitant about. He was afraid of rejection. She reached up and placed her hand softly on Harry's

cheek to get his attention. When he looked her in the eyes she said, "He'll be overjoyed to meet you, Harry. If anything, he'll faint from the shock. I'm sure he'll be happy to have a Prongslet as well as a Rosebud now."

Harry smiled confidently. "You're right," he said after a moment. "Let's go."

The two walked hand in hand to the Hog's Head, both of them ignoring the jealous glances they received from the other students. They entered the dingy pub and took a seat in a dimly lit corner to wait for Sirius. Harry ordered three drinks; a butterbeer for Rose and two fire whiskeys for himself and Sirius when he arrived. Rose fidgeted nervously as she sipped her drink. She looked over at Harry and saw him smirking knowingly at her. "What?" she snapped.

"He's not going to mistake me for Dad," Harry said softly. Rose's eyes widened almost comically.

"It's almost like we can read each other's minds," she said after a moment.

"Technically..." Harry began.

"Oh, shush!" Rose chided with a smile.

"Well, we are pretty much the same person," Harry said seriously. "We do kinda know how the other thinks." Rose nodded, and then Harry couldn't resist one cheeky jab. "It'd be great for a marriage."

Just as he thought, Rose turned the color of her namesake and tried to drown herself in her butterbeer. She muttered something through the liquid and all Harry could make out was, 'love too' and 'too young'.

Harry smiled lovingly at the girl. "I know," he said softly. "And I would too, but we have to take care of some things first."

Rose couldn't stop the exuberant smile from growing on her face. Harry had essentially just promised himself to her. She felt like she was floating through the clouds and her mind was filled with fantasies of her and Harry's wedding and future family.

“There he is.”

Rose came crashing back to earth almost painfully. She looked around the pub in a panic but didn't see anyone new. “Where?” she asked.

Harry pointed across the room at a blurry shape standing in the far corner. Rose saw it immediately thanks to her enhanced eyes. She waved him over, figuring that Sirius was waiting for some sort of acknowledgement from her. Sure enough, once she waved, the disillusioned form approached the table. But before either Rose or Harry could say anything, Sirius spoke up.

“Where did you first meet me?” he growled.

Rose, slightly taken aback by the sudden hostility glanced over at Harry who nodded slightly. “Uh, in the shrieking shack, last year, with Professor Lupin and...Wormtail.”

Sirius canceled the spell on himself and lowered his hood, smiling warmly at his goddaughter. Rose made to give him a hug but he held her at arms length. “Wait, how do you know I'm really me?”

“Want to blow his mind?” Harry asked Rose mentally.

“Yes. Yes I do...” Rose answered back.

“Ask him where he lives. He should answer that he can't tell you. Then you should threaten to leave, and he will say he lives at 12 Grimmauld Place.”

Rose didn't know what 12 Grimmauld Place was, but decided to go along with Harry's plan. “Where do you live?” she asked.

Sirius looked like a deer caught in the headlights of a lorry. “I- I can't tell you that,” he said.

It took everything Rose had not to smile triumphantly and break out in laughter. Harry really did know Sirius too well. “Then I'm leaving,” she said as nonchalantly as possible.

“Wait!” Sirius said in a panic. Harry and Rose watched his face. First was the sign of confusion, which Harry explained was Sirius wondering just how Rose knew about 12 Grimmauld, then came a constipated expression as he fought through the *fidelius* charm to tell her the information that she asked for.

“Twelve...Grimmauld...Place.”

“Snuffles!” Rose cried and threw herself into Sirius’ arms and hugged him for all she was worth.

It took Harry everything he had not to do the same. When he first saw this Sirius, a multitude of emotions sprung up in him. Disbelief came first, followed shortly by jealousy as he watched Rose hug the man. Finally, acceptance and happiness managed to beat back the negative emotion. He sat silently and waited to be noticed by the older man.

Sirius held Rose out at arms length and looked her up and down appraisingly. “Damn, Rosebud, you’ve grown,” he breathed. “You look just like your mother.”

Rose blushed at the thinly veiled compliment. “Thank you, Sirius,” she whispered.

“Now, in all seriousness,” Sirius said. Harry had to stop himself from chuckling at the stupid joke. “How the hell did you know about...the...place?” He was unable to force himself to say the address again.

“What place?” Rose asked innocently. She really had no clue, not having been clued in by Dumbledore, the secret keeper.

“Where I live,” Sirius explained.

“Oh!” Rose exclaimed as if she just remembered something. “Harry just told me to ask.” She pointed at the corner of the booth and Sirius noticed Harry sitting there for the first time.

“Holy crap!” he exclaimed. “You really do look like James”

“Watch this,” Harry told Rose mentally. “I should. He is my father after all.”

Sirius nodded, acting like Harry had just said that it was a nice day that day. “So, would you mind telling me what...wait...” Sirius paused and stared directly at Harry. “What?”

Rose snickered at the gobsmeared expression on Sirius’ face. “Sirius, I’d like you to meet my boyfriend, Harry James Potter.”

Disgust warred with disbelief for dominance on Sirius’ face. His first thoughts were that James had been unfaithful to Lily, but that was quickly quashed. James would never have been unfaithful. His second thought was that Rose was dating her brother, but that was killed by the first argument in his head. James and Lily had only one child; Rose. Finally, he settled on the fact that it was all a prank that Rose had decided to pull on him.

“Ha, ha, very funny,” he said at length. “You can drop the illusion now.”

“What illusion, Padfoot?” Harry asked. There was an uncomfortable pause.

“You’re serious?”

Rose couldn’t resist. “No you are. That’s Harry.”

Harry couldn’t hold it in any longer and nearly fell off the booth he was laughing so hard. “The look on your face,” he managed to gasp out between peals of laughter.

Rose sighed and guided a shell shocked Sirius to the table. “Sit down, Sirius; we have a lot to tell you.”

Once Harry managed to calm down, he and Rose told Sirius about their relationship and what was going on with the tournament. It took Sirius nearly an hour and three whiskeys to finally finish processing everything. Rose looked at Harry questioningly. **“What about the rest of it?”**

"I really don't want to repeat myself a third time later," he explained.

Rose squealed excitedly, making Sirius look at her like she was crazy. **"You mean we can tell Hermione?"** Harry nodded and Rose threw herself across the table to give Harry a passionate kiss. Sirius couldn't hold his chuckle.

When Rose was done and properly mortified Harry said, **"I will tell her. I want you to set up a meeting time and let me know. I'll bring Sirius and let them both know."**

Finally, "Merlin, you really do look like James." Sirius said while watching Rose bounce excitedly in her seat. He hadn't the first clue was to why she was so happy, but if Harry was the reason for the changes and happiness in his goddaughter, he wasn't going to be the one to stop it.

"That's it?" Harry asked incredulously. "That's all you have to say?"

"Well, it is a lot to take in all at once," Sirius explained.

"So you won't tell the manipulative old man?" Rose asked.

Sirius shook his head a bit drunkenly. "You two definitely look happy. And it's kinda like a huge prank on ol' Dumbledore, isn't it?" He said with a wistful smile. "So, I approve."

"You haven't heard the half of it, Sirius," Harry said with a smirk. Sirius looked crestfallen that there was more.

Rose glanced at her watch and squawked. "I need to get back to the castle to talk with Hermione," she blurted. She gave Harry yet another passionate kiss, one with lots of tongue and pulled away breathlessly. Harry looked a bit dazed by the kiss. "I'll see you in the morning hot stuff."

Once Rose left the pub, Harry turned back to Sirius who was looking at his empty whiskey glass a bit despondently. "So, how'd you like to come live with me?"

Sirius' only response was an enthusiastic nod.

Chapter 16

“Concentrate, Rose.” said Harry.

Harry and Rose sat facing each other on a plush rug in the Room of Requirement, both of them with their legs crossed. At Rose’s request, Harry had modelled the room after the living room of their house in Hogsmeade. That morning, Harry had decided that they would work on Rose’s Occlumency then her sword training afterward. Her Animagus training had come to a close and there was nothing that Harry could show the girl that would help her transform; it was all up to her now.

Harry was currently probing Rose’s mental defences while she tried to keep him out of her mind. She wasn’t rubbish at Occlumency, but she wasn’t a prodigy either. Harry had instructed her to imagine her mind as the place she felt safest. For Harry, the place he felt the safest was Hogwarts. Even after discovering Dumbledore’s manipulations and numerous attacks by the Dark Lord, the ancient castle remained safe and sturdy.

Rose imagined her mind as their house, and Harry felt a warm tingly feeling when Rose told him so. The next step was the tricky part. She needed to secure her memories in the structure of her mind and ward them from detection. Harry explained that the warding could be in almost any form, from mentally casting spells, charms and wards, to simply locking the doors and windows. Rose was determined to do both.

“Okay, I think I have it.” she whispered.

“Ready?” Harry asked. When Rose nodded, he cast *Legilimens*.

There was a rushing sensation, like being pushed through a tube before Harry found himself both looking at Rose in the Room of Requirement and at an exact replica of their house. Even after having mastered and used the spell since he was sixteen, he still found the dual-vision sensation disorienting. The odd thing was, no one else felt the same sensation that Harry did. Before the headmaster died, Harry had the chance to ask Dumbledore what his Legilimency felt like, and

the old man had explained that it felt like he was simply pushing against a wall. When the spell was successful, the wall yielded and he was able to peruse the memories much like in a pensieve.

Hermione, whom Harry had practiced with, felt much the same thing as the headmaster. It seemed that Harry had the unique ability to actually see a person's mental defences and interact with them. Hermione had imagined her mind as a library, with all her memories as books locked away in their cases. He was even able to communicate with the person if he so chose and it was this that made him uniquely suited to teach Occlumency.

Thus, he found himself wandering outside his own home in the mind of a teenage girl. He walked up to the front door and found it sufficiently locked and warded. Nodding to himself he walked the perimeter of the house checking each window and finally the back door. He was satisfied that Rose's mind was secure until he came to the entrance to the cellar. *Rose?* he called.

Yes? Rose's voice echoed eerily about the mindscape.

Our house doesn't have a cellar, Rose Harry said worriedly. He hoped that it wasn't what he thought it was.

What cellar?

Harry both mentally and physically groaned and palmed his face in his hand. It was as he feared; the scar connection created a back door of sorts to Rose's mind. It wasn't just an extra access for Voldemort but a completely open and unguarded door into the girl's mind. *Okay, I want you come in here with me.* he instructed.

Rose concentrated for a moment then materialised in the mindscape with Harry. She, unlike Harry though, was naked. She squeaked and reddened with embarrassment while Harry chuckled at her. *Why am I naked?* she murmured. Not that she was opposed to Harry seeing her in all her glory, but she wanted it to be on her terms. Not by accident.

It's your mind. Maybe you wanted me to see? Harry offered. When Rose glared at him, he added. *You can imagine yourself some clothing you know.*

Rose closed her eyes and a beautiful white satin gown shimmered into existence on her. She smirked at Harry's raised eyebrow and stuck her tongue out at him playfully. So she said. *What's wrong?*

Can you see this? Harry asked, pointing at the cellar door.

See what?

Harry sighed and closed his eyes. *Damn*, he thought. He needed some way for Rose to see the connection with Voldemort, but he was at a loss. He knew that the connection was represented physically by her scar... Her scar! *Rose, I need you to concentrate on your scar. Everything about it; its shape, its colour, how it feels, the pain...everything.*

Why? she asked.

You have a door here that you don't know about Harry said casually, as if it explained everything. And it did; Rose's eyes widened in a panic as she realised what Harry was telling her. "Just concentrate on your scar and on this spot at the same time. If I'm right, you should see the cellar door."

Rose swallowed and then nodded. She focused on her scar. She recalled how it felt, what it looked like and what it did to her, and slowly, almost excruciatingly so, a wooden door phased into existence in the spot Harry instructed her to look. *Oh my god...* she breathed.

That, Harry explained with a flourish, *would be your scar connection.* Then he smiled mischievously. *Want to explore it?*

Rose looked like she swallowed something foul. She would rather simply ward, lock and entomb the door away so Voldemort could never use it against her. But unfortunately, her curiosity got the better of her. *I guess* she said hesitantly.

Rose approached the innocuous looking wooden door. No one would have been able to know that this was the entrance into the mind of a madman. She hesitantly pulled on the handle and the door opened with an ominous groan and a gust of nasty smelling air. Rose nearly gagged as she staggered away and into Harry's arms.

He looked at Rose worriedly. *You don't have to do this if you don't want to* he said.

Rose smiled shakily up at him. *I know. I need to though.*

I can't go with you he said.

Rose nodded and kissed Harry warmly and the mindscape whirled with pinks and bright reds. Rose gasped and pulled away as the sensation of pleasure and love nearly overwhelmed her. She saw Harry blink in surprise. *Wow* she whispered.

I'll say Harry answered as he urged her toward the gaping entrance into the ground. *Be careful. I love you.*

Rose walked cautiously through the doorway and into a stone walled room. The room had three doorways. The one she went through, another that seemed to be made of a damp-black wood, and the third which was made of rich oak. She decided to go through the oak door first and, as she guessed, it led into the house. It was an extra entrance into her mind she realised with a shiver. She made sure to lock, chain, ward and trap that door thoroughly before moving on to the black door.

Just being near it caused chills to run down her spine and she debated on whether or not to open it. Finally gathering up all her Gryffindor courage she pushed on the door and found that it opened easily and silently, as if the hinges had just been oiled. The tunnel beyond the door frightened her even more, though. It was dark and damp, and Rose could hear dripping sounds in the blackness beyond. She was pretty sure at that point that the tunnel led into Voldemort's mind, but she wasn't about to find out now. She closed the door and put as many wards and locks on her side as she could. When she was done, it looked less like a wooden cellar door and more like a bank vault door.

Satisfied with her work, Rose left the cellar and met a worried-looking Harry on the outside of the house.

Is it secure? he asked. Rose nodded wearily. *Do you feel up to me testing them?*

No Rose said. *I don't think my mind can take much more abuse today.*

Harry chuckled and faded from Rose's mind. "You still feel up to swordplay?"

Rose nodded eagerly. "I said my mind can't take much more, I didn't say I wasn't up to whooping you in a fight."

"That sounds like a challenge." Harry taunted. Rose blew a raspberry at him.

"You know I wouldn't be able to take you in a one-on-one fight."

"You're coming awfully close." Harry said. "So, just sword training then?"

Rose concentrated, *summoning* her Sword of Gryffindor to her hand, the weapon appearing with a small pop. She found early on that, like Harry had suggested, she favoured light, quick blades. She eventually settled on a sabre. The blade of her sword was twenty inches long, and the hilt and pommel retained the same shape and design as the original sword, if a little lighter. Rose gripped her sword and swung it with a flourish before pointing it at Harry, who was brandishing his own long sword version of the blade. "En garde!"

They sparred back and forth, with Harry giving critiques and compliments where necessary. Harry had discovered late in his seventh year that the Sword of Gryffindor wouldn't harm anyone the wielder didn't want it to. Thus, seeing as how Rose and Harry didn't want to harm each other, they could practice with the undulled edges of their respective swords without fear of injury.

Rose landed a solid blow to Harry's ribs after a perfect parry and Harry called a stop to the training. Like her Animagus lessons, Rose was taking to the sword like a fish to water and Harry felt very proud

of her. Harry checked his watch. "Okay, before we go, I want to discuss the second task with you."

For a second time that morning, Rose's eyes widened in panic. She hadn't given the tournament any thought what so ever since the first task and the second task was tomorrow. "Oh my god! I completely forgot!" she shrieked.

Harry put a calming arm on her shoulder and Rose took a few deep breaths. "You already have a huge advantage with me here." he said reassuringly. "You remember what I told you was going to happen?"

Rose nodded. "They're going to take you into the lake and I will have to rescue you from the merfolk." Rose said in a small voice. "But how-

Harry interrupted her with a finger over her lips which Rose kissed automatically. "You've become a very powerful witch," Harry explained. "so, I'll only give you one hint; phoenixes can teleport *anywhere*."

The girl nodded and kissed Harry's finger again, sucking lightly on it with a small smirk. Harry gasped and smiled at her. "Oh, you want to play that way, do you?"

Rose nodded as Harry pulled her to him and kissed her deeply. A few minutes later, after Harry flamed back to their house, a very dishevelled but satisfied Rose left the Room of Requirement.

(((o)))

As soon as Harry arrived at his house, he set about lifting the *Fidelius* charm from it. He knew that at some point during the day the tournament organisers would come to collect Harry for the second task. It didn't take him long, as reversing the *Fidelius* was much simpler than actually casting it. All it took was the desire for others to know where the location was, and the phrase, "*Fidelius finite*."

Once he was done, Harry retreated to his library to do some light reading. He still hadn't made any headway as to his mystery stalker, but he was sure it had something to do with his travel from his

dimension to this one. It wasn't long, however, before he heard a light knock at his front door. With a sigh, Harry closed his book and went to answer it.

Harry schooled his face into a pleasant expression before opening the door. Sure enough Dumbledore was on the other side smiling pleasantly as well. "Good morning, Headmaster." Harry said. He decided not to hide anything, seeing as how he had already let known that he had knowledge beyond what he should. "Come to tell me about the second task?"

Dumbledore's eyes widening slightly was his only reaction, but beyond that he was completely nonplussed. When it came to Rose and her boyfriend not much surprised him anymore. "Indeed I am. Am I to assume you already know what is to happen?" Harry nodded. "Then let us head back to the castle. We have much to discuss."

Harry muttered something under his breath to the tune of, "I'm sure." but he followed the headmaster out into the streets of Hogsmeade and up to the castle.

"It is amazing, really," Dumbledore began as soon as they left the house, "how we were unable to find you during the holidays. It's almost as if your house didn't exist before."

"It didn't, technically." Harry said offhandedly. "Unless I wanted you to know."

Yet again, Dumbledore was surprised. The *Fidelius* charm was one of the most complex and power consuming spells known to the Wizarding world. "You can cast the *Fidelius*?"

"Rose can, too."

"Really?" Dumbledore said, not bothering to hide his shock. "What else can she do?"

"She can do quite a few things you're unaware of."

"So, Harry, who are you... really?"

Again with the direct approach Thought Harry. It seemed that this Dumbledore and Harry's were more different than he first thought. "I fail to see how that's any of your business." Harry growled.

"Humour me, Mr. Potter."

Harry opened his mouth to respond but choked on whatever he was going to say. Did Dumbledore really just call him 'Mr. Potter'? He made to cover his slip up but knew the damage was done if the headmaster's smug expression was any indication. Harry sighed heavily. "How did you know?"

"Please, Mr. Potter, you insult my intelligence." Dumbledore said with mock hurt. "You and young Rose may be skilled Occlumens, but no mind is impenetrable."

"You used Legilimency on us?" Harry bellowed. *Damn that cellar door!* He had been too late in discovering it. His magic broke loose and pulsed from his body in waves causing the loose cobblestones on the street to go clattering away noisily. Crouch and Bagman, who had been slightly ahead of the two of them looked back in alarm, but Dumbledore made placating motions to both them and Harry.

"Please, Mr. Potter, you have to understand-" the aged headmaster hissed, but Harry cut him off.

"I *understand* that you're a meddlesome old man who can't keep his nose out of where it's unwanted! I *understand* that you think Rose is a weapon to be used at your discretion!" Harry's voice grew with each accusation until he was nearly screeching. "I *understand*-"

"Mr. Potter!" Dumbledore growled. "Please, you have to understand that I wouldn't wish this on anyone, let alone the young woman I see as my own granddaughter. You also have to understand the position I am in. An unknown person shows up out of nowhere and is suddenly Rose Potter's boyfriend?"

Harry bit back his retort and determined not to continue arguing with the headmaster, but he had to know one thing. "Then why the questions?" To Harry's surprise, Dumbledore actually looked bashful before responding.

"I wanted to see how forthcoming you would be."

Harry sighed and rubbed his face wearily. Everything he and Rose had worked for could have been destroyed just now. "How long have you known?"

"Since the Yule ball."

"Why didn't you confront Rose about it?"

"I assume you know the prophecy?" Dumbledore asked. Harry nodded. "Then you know what I assume the 'power the dark lord knows not' to be?"

"Love..."

"Indeed. Rose's love for you is powerful indeed."

"That's not the power." Harry said suddenly.

Dumbledore paused and looked at Harry strangely. "Indeed. And just how do you know that?"

"You'll have to regain my trust before I tell you that." Harry said.

"How can I regain what I never possessed in the first place?" Dumbledore said sadly.

Harry just raised his eyebrow.

Dumbledore sighed heavily. "Harry, it would be better for us to be allies than enemies."

"We'll see..."

The rest of the walk preceded in silence until they reached the castle. "Can I trust you to keep my secret until I say otherwise?" Harry asked.

"Of course you can, Mr. Evans." Dumbledore led them into the annex off of the great hall, where a group of people had gathered. Harry noticed the heads of the other two schools, Hermione, Gabrielle Delacour, and Cho in the room along with Professors McGonagall

and Snape. Snape's lip curled disdainfully at Harry when they entered. All eyes turned toward the arrivals and Harry fought the urge to find somewhere to hide. He never was good with attention.

"Now that we're all gathered, I believe we can begin." Dumbledore said pleasantly. "We have gathered you four because each of you is precious to one of the champions."

"For those of you that don't know already," Dumbledore said with a pointed look in Harry's direction, "the second task for the champions is to rescue you from the bottom of the black lake in under an hour."

This statement was met with gasps from the three young girls and knowing silence from Harry. He noticed Snape raise a curious brow at his reaction but paid it no heed. Snape was the least of his concerns at the moment.

Dumbledore calmed them down before speaking again. "Please, we have taken every safety precaution to make sure nothing happens to any of you. In an hour, you will be given a modified version of the draught of living death and taken to the lake. Once submerged in the water, the draught will take affect and you will fall into a coma. Once your champion breaches the surface of the lake with you, the potions effects will be lifted and you will awaken."

Harry had always wondered what had been used to put the hostages to sleep, but it was only a passing interest. Now that he knew, and he assumed that Professor Snape had brewed the modified potions, his respect for the spy's potion making skills went up a notch. Modifying any potion, let alone the draught of living death was difficult at best.

"Are there any questions?"

Of course, Maxime and Karkaroff had questions. More like objections, anyway. "Yes, Dumbly-door, I 'ave a question. Eesn't eet against the rules for a non student to participate in the tournament?" Maxime asked with a barely concealed glare at Harry. Harry glared back and Maxime backed down.

Dumbledore nodded in recognition of the question. "In normal circumstances, Madame, yes. But, Miss Potter has recently had a

falling out with her closest friends, with the exception of Miss Granger here, who is already claimed by Mr. Krum. Harry Evans, as her significant other, is the next best qualified for the role.” Karkaroff looked like he wanted to object as well, so Dumbledore continued. “I have already cleared it with the organisers of the tournament.”

Karkaroff backed down as well and Dumbledore looked around at those gathered. “Are there any further questions?” When no one raised any, the headmaster clapped his hands and a breakfast banquet appeared in the annex. “Very well then, let us eat.”

(((o)))

Wednesday, February 24th, dawned overcast and chilly and Rose woke up with a foreboding feeling about the day. Today was the day that second task was to take place, at nine thirty in the morning. She ate an early breakfast by herself and began to worry when Hermione didn't show up.

After she finished eating, McGonagall gathered the champions together and led them down to the lake where the champion's tent was set up for them to get ready. As Rose entered the garishly-coloured tent, she scanned the crowd, hoping beyond hope that Harry would be there, waving supportively at her. But it was not to be, since she knew that, with Harry being the person most precious to her, that Harry would be at the bottom of the lake waiting on her to rescue him.

So, instead of Harry, Rose scanned the crowd for Hermione, but the bookworm was nowhere in sight. She then remembered that Hermione would most likely be taken for Krum and thus resolved that she was alone. She did, however, catch Ron's eye, and he simply sneered at her. He hadn't taken her rejection of his Christmas gift very well.

Rose made her way to the starting point and concentrated on her plan. She knew she was a shoe in for this task because of her Animagus abilities, but she would still need to be able to breathe water for a bit to free Harry from his ropes so Harry had taught her a bit of transfiguration to give herself gills. She didn't need any real way

of moving through the water though, since she could just teleport down and back again in, literally, a flash.

She knew that she didn't really need to keep it a secret that she could fire teleport, seeing as almost everyone in the school had seen both her and Harry flame away from the dance. Still, Harry had suggested that she keep up appearances and she decided to get as far away from the others as possible before flaming.

A heavy hand on her shoulder startled her from her thoughts. She looked up into the round boyish face of Ludo Bagman. "Yes?" she asked.

"Are you ready? We're about to start." he said. Rose nodded and took her starting position on the platform, between a sullen looking Krum and a panicked Fleur.

She didn't hear Bagman announcing the event to the crowd, but instead tried to contact Harry through the rings. She didn't expect any answer, and she wasn't disappointed when she heard nothing but static through the connection. She briefly wondered why she would hear static, since static was definitely Muggle, but she quickly forgot that train of thought when she heard a whistle blow. Fleur and Cedric dove in head first, but both she and Krum stayed out of the water to perform their spells. Krum changed his head into that of a shark, just like in Harry's memory and with a quick wave of her wand on either side of her neck, she soon had gills.

It was an interesting sensation, having gills outside of the water. Rose likened it to having a sheet of wet cloth over one's mouth and nose and trying to breath through it. She felt like she was suffocating and quickly dove in the water, gulping mouthfuls of it and relishing the oxygen it offered. She then watched Krum disappear into the depths before swimming down a good ten feet and vanishing in a burst of bubbles and steam.

It felt odd, Rose thought, appearing underwater as opposed to in the air. When she appeared, there was a brief sensation of being smothered before it abruptly lifted. Air was more yielding than water, being less dense, and she immediately decided that she would never flame underwater ever again after today.

She also realised that she had panicked the merfolk and found herself at the point of numerous tridents. She held her hands up in surrender and mouthed that she was one of the champions. The merfolk didn't seem to understand her so she looked around until she saw Harry, then pointed at herself, then Harry, then the surface. The merfolk backed down and cleared the way to the hostages who were tethered to a stone statue of a merperson and floating gently in the water.

Rose swam over to Harry and looked him over. He really did look dead, she noticed. She drew her wand and cast a silent cutting hex to sever the rope then gently took hold of his arm and guided him gently away from the merfolk before flaming back to the surface. She was right on her mark; just fifteen feet beneath the surface of the water, and she reversed the gill transfiguration before coming up for air.

The crowd, which had been conversing amongst itself since the champions went under, immediately silenced when the two broke the surface, coughing and spluttering. It had taken Rose less than five minutes to rescue her hostage; the quickest time in the history of the Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Together, Rose and Harry floated over to the platform, where Rose struggled to get Harry's mostly dead weight up the ladder. She was quickly becoming irritated with the silence and she shouted, "Well, isn't anyone going to help us out?"

Dumbledore hurried over to give the youths a hand up onto the platform while Bagman announced to the crowd, "Rose Potter has just done the impossible. In just four minutes and twenty seven seconds, she rescued her hostage and made it back to the surface! It's a new record!"

The crowd then went wild. Even some of the Beauxbatons and Durmstrang students were chanting her name and cheering wildly. She didn't blush until Harry leaned over to give her a chaste kiss on the cheek at which her face lit up like a candle. Rose was allowed to rest with Harry for the rest of the task and he took the opportunity to tell her that Dumbledore knew who Harry really was.

Rose panicked slightly, but Harry's reassuring presence in her mind calmed her. **"Don't worry"** he said. **"He won't tell anyone."**

Rose glowered at him. **"How can you trust him after all he's done to us?"** she growled.

"I don't." Harry answered. **"But trust me. He won't tell anyone."**

Rose still seemed sceptical, but she nodded her consent.

It wasn't long before Cedric came back with a sodden Cho, with Fleur following shortly after with her limp sister in her arms. But Harry and Rose began to worry when, as the hour mark approached, Krum still hadn't resurfaced with Hermione.

An hour and ten minutes after the task had started, the Merchieftainess, a wild and fierce looking merperson, brought an unconscious and bloody Krum to the surface. Karkaroff and Dumbledore rushed over to help the young man onto the platform while Dumbledore listened to the Merchieftainess explain what happened.

"What's going on?" Rose asked. Harry shushed her and listened closer to the conversation. Rose was a little angry that Harry would shush her like that, but was even more amazed that Harry understood Mermish.

"It's hard to make out, but I'm pretty sure that they had a kelpie attack and took Hermione away." Harry explained, and Rose's eyes widened in panic. "Go, before anyone can stop you!"

Rose dove back in the water after giving herself gills. Professor McGonagall made to stop her but Harry weakly held the teacher back. "Let her go." he said softly. "She knows what she's doing."

McGonagall looked worriedly at the water before turning back toward Harry with a stormy expression on her face. "She had better, Mr. Evans."

Rose wasted no time in flaming back to the merpeople village. She swam back to the statue where the hostages were and found a group

of merfolk gathered around, conversing about something. Their language, while screechy and harsh above the water, was strangely beautiful underwater. *It sounds almost like birdsong mixed with whale noises.* Rose thought.

One of the merfolk saw her coming and swam out to meet her. Seeing as Rose couldn't get any air in her lungs to make noise with, she gesticulated wildly at the statue trying to get her point across. The merman, a sturdy looking male, took pity on her. "You look for girl?" he asked.

Rose paused and stared at the merman incredulously. *They can speak English?*

Almost as if she had asked the question out loud, the merman answered. "Yes, I speak human language." he said with something akin to a smile on his fishy lips. "Your friend taken by kelpie. They go that way." He pointed toward a deeper and darker section of the black lake.

Rose gestured to the gathered merpeople, then to herself, and finally in the direction the merman indicated. She wanted their help.

The merman shook his head sadly. "We can not help. Kelpie sacred to merpeople. We no understand why it attack."

If Rose could sigh underwater she would. She was alone in this. Taking a moment to transfigure her feet into flippers and web her fingers, she set off in the direction she was told. It didn't take her long to find the kelpie's cave. It was huge, and the size of it did nothing to reassure Rose. She glided silently into the blackness after silently charming her eyes to see in the dark.

The entrance of the cave was a tunnel that led into a large chamber that was full of glowing, multicoloured crystals. On the far end of the chamber, Rose could see the surface of the water. Evidently, there was a pocket of air in this cave. If this hadn't been a life threatening situation, Rose would have thought it beautiful. But she didn't have time to admire the scenery, so she quickly searched the water. After finding no sign of Hermione, she determined that her friend was in the air pocket.

This could be problematic Rose thought. Where she was good at self-transfiguration, she still was rather bad at human transfiguration in general, and that meant other people. So, giving Hermione gills to breath water was out of the question, and she didn't want to flame around more than she had to. Still, if worse came to worse, she could flame them both to the surface.

Slowly, she breached the surface and looked into the air pocket. The rest of the cave was a white sandy beach with various subterranean plants glowing in the sand. The same crystals that grew under water grew above it, and gave off a soft light. Then Rose saw her friend.

Hermione was curled up in the far corner of the cave, shivering with cold and fear. She was still wet and she was glancing around the cave, looking for anything that might help her out.

"Psst!" Rose hissed, trying to get Hermione's attention, but she looked everywhere but at the water. Finally, when Hermione noticed Rose's head and shoulders protruding above the surface, she beamed.

Hermione pointed over at a cluster of crystals near Rose and made shushing motions with her hands. Rose glanced over and had to stifle a gasp; she was mere feet from the sleeping kelpie.

The beast was huge. Its ten foot long equine body was covered in fine green scales, as well as its horse like head. Its fish shaped tail moved lazily back and forth, stopping just inches from hitting Rose. She floated away desperately from the aquatic horse but paused when something caught her eye. There was a black pulsating lump on the back of the kelpie's neck. "**Hey Harry?**" she asked.

Harry's groggy thought filled her head. "**Yeah?**" It seemed he still wasn't over the draught yet.

"You feel up to looking through my eyes here?" Rose asked. **"I have something you need to see."**

Rose felt her eyes tingle as Harry melded his sight with hers. **"You found it?"** he asked. Rose stared at the black lump on it's neck. **"Oh, Merlin..."**

“What?” Rose asked.

“That black lump, it’s an *Imperio* cyst,” Harry said. He could feel Rose’s confusion, so he hastened to explain. **“It’s a physical manifestation of an *Imperio* curse. It allows the caster to control their target without having to recast the spell over and over again.”**

“Can I get it off?” Rose asked.

“Yes, you can, but the only spell I’ve discovered that will take it off is *Sectumsempra*,” Harry said. He felt Rose panic a bit then sighed, realising that she didn’t know the spell. **“Brace yourself; this might be a little disorienting.”**

Rose was about ask what would be disorienting, but she was suddenly overcome with a horrible dizziness. Then she saw memories that she knew weren’t hers. She saw Harry reading a book that had been heavily defaced and recognised it as the half blood prince’s book. Then she suddenly knew how to cast the *Sectumsempra* spell... and felt like she needed to vomit.

“Are you okay, Rose?” Harry asked.

“Yeah.” Rose answered back as soon as the cave stopped spinning. **“Now, how exactly do I-”**

But, Rose didn’t get to finish as Hermione yelled, “Rose, watch out!”

Rose looked over at Hermione, and saw her looking fearfully at the kelpie. She turned toward the kelpie just in time for it to smash its heavily muscled tail into her and send her careening into the cave wall. Rose screamed in pain when she felt something crunch in her shoulder. Fortunately it was her left one, so she could still use her wand.

The kelpie reared up on its back hooves and brayed at her as Rose fired a stunner at the creature. The burst of red magic simply reflected off of its shiny green scales and it lunged at her again. She rolled out of the way of the kelpie’s hooves, but right into the path of its tail and she once again found herself sailing through the air. She

managed to get a good aim on the cyst and fired a *Sectumsempra*. The spell was on its mark and it severed the black growth from the back of the kelpie's neck. The cyst fell to the sand with a fleshy thud, and the kelpie roared in pain before diving into the water and swimming away.

As Rose lay panting in the sand, Hermione scampered over to the red head, and gingerly felt her shoulder. "Oh my god, Rose! Are you okay?"

Rose groaned and rolled over to face her. "My shoulder hurts, but other than that, I'm fine."

"Give me your wand." Hermione commanded. Rose handed the wood to her and Hermione quickly cast a numbing charm over Rose's shoulder. Rose then noted that for all the combat magic she learned from Harry, she still didn't have any knowledge of healing magics. Still, she was sure very few people could best her in a duel at this point.

Rose took her wand back from Hermione. "Hold on to me." she told Hermione. Hermione did without hesitation. "Ready?" Rose asked. When Hermione nodded Rose concentrated on Harry and the two girls flamed out of the cave.

((o)))

Harry had mostly recovered from the potion by the time the girls appeared on the platform, startling everyone around in a burst of fire. Madam Pomfrey bustled the two of them off to the hospital wing almost immediately, but not before Harry had the chance to kiss Rose goodbye and tell Hermione to meet the two of them in the Room of Requirement that Saturday.

Harry stuck around for the judging, since Rose wouldn't have the opportunity to hear her score. The judges, after much deliberation, decided to give her extra points for outstanding moral fibre in rescuing Hermione from the kelpie and for utterly destroying the previous record of thirty five minutes. In the end, she had a whopping one hundred four points out of one hundred. She had more points than the total, which again, was a first in the history of the tournament.

Harry couldn't feel more proud of her.

Chapter 17

The next morning, Harry groggily staggered into the kitchen to make breakfast

The next morning, Harry groggily staggered into the kitchen to make breakfast. It seemed that the Draught of Living Death he had taken for the second task still hadn't worn off completely, and he cursed the inventor of said potion.

He could tell by the heated, one-sided conversation in the living room that Sirius was already awake and made the mistake of waking Lily. Just like when she was alive, the portrait of Harry's mother was *nota* morning person. It seemed that this morning's tirade was Lily reaming Sirius for doing something stupid enough to land himself in Azkaban and leaving Rose with the Dursleys. He knew he would attract his mother's ire if he caught her attention with her in her current mood, so he snuck into the kitchen as silently as possible.

Unfortunately, he wasn't sneaky enough as Sirius noticed him out of the corner of his eye. "Harry!" he called desperately. "Help!"

"And *you*-" Lily growled, levelling an accusing finger at her son when she noticed him sneaking through the room.

His cover blown, Harry dashed into the kitchen like a madman and made a point of rattling the pots and pans as loudly as possible. "Sorry, Mum, don't have time. I've got to get breakfast made so I can get on with Rose's lessons. Want to give me a hand, Padfoot?"

Sirius took advantage of the distraction and followed his godson into the kitchen. "Merlin, I thought that would never end..." he whined.

Harry just snickered and finished cooking. When it was done, he and Sirius sat down and ate their breakfast in silence. It wasn't long before they finished and Lily called from the living room.

"Harry, Sirius, can you come in here for a bit?"

Harry put his and Sirius' dishes in the sink and cast a quick auto-wash charm. He dried his hands and followed Sirius into the living room. "Sure thing, Mum. What's up?"

Lily motioned for them to sit and waited for them to do so before continuing. "We wanted to talk to you about a few things," she began pensively.

Harry nodded slowly. "Okay..." Usually conversations that began with 'we need to talk,' were never pleasant, and potentially very embarrassing.

James continued where Lily left off. "We'd like to know what your plans are."

"Plans?" Harry asked.

James nodded. "You know... Voldemort, Rose-"

"Wormtail..." Sirius growled.

"Wormtail." James reiterated.

Harry sighed and rubbed the back of his neck wearily. "Where to start?"

"How about your plans for Rose?" Lily offered.

"Like what?" Harry asked reluctantly. He had gone for so long without any kind of supervision that he was loathing to answer or explain his plans to anyone.

"Everything." Lily said simply. "The rune chamber, her training. Your intentions..."

Everyone stared at Harry and he shifted uncomfortably from his seat on the couch. "Well... uh... I think her boost from the rune chamber will be similar to mine... maybe a couple of little differences. I'm just worried that the chamber might reject her."

James blew a raspberry and made a dismissive gesture. "It won't." he said simply.

Harry shook his head bemusedly. "But the Unspeakables told me that if you weren't of-age, it wouldn't work for you. It killed two of them and it only worked for me because of the prophecy."

James laughed. "That may be true, but the Unspeakables had two strikes against them. They weren't Potters, and they didn't have a Potter vouch for them.

"So, Rose should be fine?" Harry asked after thinking for a moment.

James nodded and Lily and Sirius both breathed sighs of relief.

Harry noted that James seemed eager to say something else, but a bit hesitant as well. "What, Dad?"

"You never did tell us what you got from the chamber." James nearly blurted.

Harry frowned. He'd never liked being different, but Fate had deemed that he be the 'Boy-Who-Lived'. He especially disliked telling about his time in the chamber, as it felt like he had cheated to gain his powers. "My magical core was multiplied about ten-fold, and it negated my need for a wand. I used to think it had something to do with one of my Animagus transformations, but now I'm not too sure."

James and Sirius both spoke at the same time. "'One of'?"

"Yeah," Harry said bashfully. "I have two transformations; a phoenix and a basilisk."

The portraits and Sirius were shocked silent.

Finally Sirius spoke up. "Bloody hell, Harry, you don't do anything small..."

Harry glared at him and Lily came to Sirius' rescue.

“Harry, you have to understand, while it’s rare to have a magical form and unusual to have more than one form, it’s unheard of to have two magical forms.” she explained. “I think the chamber may have had something to do with it. When did you discover your second form?”

“After my experience in the chamber...” Harry said in realisation.

Lily smiled smugly. “There you go.”

Harry was pensive for a moment. “So, you think Rose might gain a second form?” he asked.

“I wouldn’t discount it.” Lily said.

“Did you get anything else?” James asked eagerly.

Harry shook his head. “Not that I know of.” he said. “When should we plan on getting her into the chamber anyway?”

Lily thought for a few seconds. “I’d say about a week before the third task. It’ll give her time to adjust to her new powers and give her an advantage in the hedge maze.”

Harry nodded in agreement. “Now, what else?”

“Your plans for Voldemort...” James said. Harry hoped that they would avoid the topic of his intentions toward Rose. As it was, he was still unsure of them himself, but he did know that he wouldn’t mind spending the rest of his life with her. “We’ve been discussing them, and we think that Rose has to be the one to finish him off.”

“Yeah, I know.” said Harry. “But, she doesn’t have to fight him; just kill him. That’s always been my plan.”

James, Lily and Sirius stared at Harry confused.

Harry sighed and began to explain his plan. “...So once I’ve crippled Voldemort, I’ll off his snake then have Rose simply cast a cutting curse at his neck or something. Simple really.”

“Oh. I thought you were planning on killing him yourself.” Lily said.

"I wish I could..." Harry growled darkly. "She shouldn't have to have the burden of taking a life on her shoulders..."

James clapped his hands and said a bit too cheerfully, "Now that that's out of the way-"

Sirius interrupted James. "Speaking of Death Eaters..."

"Wormtail should be... incapacitated." Harry said with a nasty grin. "At least until someone releases him... or I die. And *no*, you can't kill him."

Sirius pouted and Harry looked at him reproachfully. "Freedom or revenge, Padfoot?" he asked.

Sirius muttered something about 'having his cake and eating it, too', but Harry ignored him. "I'll send someone after the Death Eaters once Voldemort is confirmed dead." he continued. "Someone I trust to *not* cover anything up or manipulate anything. That way we can get you proven innocent."

Sirius smiled appreciatively. "One more thing," he said, "are you going to tell me the rest of your story?"

"Not till tomorrow." Harry said with a mischievous grin.

"Oh, come *on*!" whined Sirius. "Please?"

"Oh, would you look at the time? I have to get to the castle to train Rose. Ta-ta!"

"*You git!*"

(((o)))

As Harry bustled about the dining room setting the table for dinner, he thought back to Rose's training session that morning. She had learned remarkably fast, and Harry didn't have much left to teach her beyond his extensive knowledge of spells. The rest of her training would simply be practice, and her magical maturation in the rune chamber. He had learned that afternoon that the Department of

Mysteries had not yet taken the rune chamber from Potter Manor. Harry had no clue how the Ministry had managed to take the entire chamber in his dimension and thus had taken steps to make the lavish house's wards more secure.

Harry suspected that once Rose had entered the chamber, her power would come close to matching Harry's own, but he still had no clue what she would get exactly. He did have his suspicions, however.

Turning back to the task at hand, Harry finished setting the table and brought out dinner. He had cooked Shepherd's Pie for himself and Sirius and frankly couldn't wait to start eating. Dinner was relatively silent between the two of them, before James' portrait spoke up.

"It's not fair. You guys still get to eat!"

Lily smacked James' shoulder. "We don't need to eat! We're not technically alive."

"That doesn't mean I don't want to..." James whined.

Sirius made a big show of savouring his bite of pie and James whimpered at him.

Harry flicked a pea at Sirius to get his attention. "Padfoot, quit it." he chided.

Sirius made ready to throw some potatoes at Harry, but was distracted when James said, "Hey, Sirius? Remember that food fight in fourth year?"

"Oh, Merlin..." Lily grumbled, shaking her head ruefully.

Sirius laughed and put his spoon of potatoes down. "Oh god, how can I forget?" he gasped. "We ended up getting it blamed on Snivellus and *he* was the first target!"

Harry listened intently as they reminisced. He had never had the opportunity to listen to any stories about his parents' time at Hogwarts and truly enjoyed hearing anything he could about them. But even over Sirius and James' raucous laughter, he still heard the slight

noise from the living room. Silently, he checked the wards and nearly cursed out loud when they told him that there was someone who was not keyed in the house with them. He waved his hand and conjured glowing letters that said *Keep talking, man in living room*.

Sirius and the portraits didn't miss a beat. "We even got Minnie in on it." Sirius said with a side-long glance in the living room. "She plastered old Slughorn with that crème pie!"

Harry gestured for Sirius to follow him. "Really? I would kill to see that."

Harry and Sirius snuck silently into the living room after Harry cast wordless disillusionment charms over the two of them. Once in the living room, Harry opened his senses to magic so he could feel as well as see the intruder. But something felt off. It was then that he realised that he couldn't feel the *Fidelius* charm over his house. For the second time that night, Harry nearly cursed. He had forgotten to cast the charm after the second task. *Why the hell am I making all these bloody mistakes?* He asked himself.

But Harry didn't have the chance to answer himself as Sirius had spotted something and immediately fired a spell at it. Harry barely had the chance to squint and make out a blurry spot before he had to dodge a spell himself. It was a stunner so Harry fired one in return, but the blur dodged to the side and Harry's spell missed. The next few seconds saw stunners fly all about the living room and Harry realised that they were getting nowhere. Both he and Sirius were disillusioned, as well as the intruder, and they were essentially firing at shadows. They were doing nothing more scoring the walls and furniture with scorch marks.

As Sirius and the intruder continued ruining Harry's living room, Harry waved his wand and cast a wide effect magic dispelling spell he had developed on his travels. There was a muffled concussive boom and a ripple of distorted air blasted outward from Harry. Everything magical in the house ceased; the clock stopped working, a few of his decorations clattered uselessly to the floor, and even portraits of his parents froze. Harry raised an eyebrow at the startled expression on the intruder's face.

The intruder was a man with a medium build and he was swathed in deep maroon robes that would have billowed impressively had he not been standing there gawking at Harry from behind his cloth mask.

Harry held up a hand to forestall Sirius from casting anymore spells. "Well, then," he began, "now that we're all here, how about you tell me what you're doing in my home?"

The man answered with a snarl and a stunner barrage that Harry effortlessly swatted away with his free hand. "All right, then. Sirius, I want him alive."

"Yes, sir!"

The three of them started firing relatively harmless spells back and forth, though the intruder focused mainly on Harry and defending himself by levitating various objects in front of Harry and Sirius' spells. Every time a vase shattered, or a chair broke, Harry winced, but he managed to keep focused. Then, without warning, the man turned toward Sirius and fired a white burst of light that Harry didn't recognise. Sirius raised a shield but the spell passed through it without slowing. "Sirius!" Harry cried.

The spell struck Sirius square in the chest and knocked him backward where he stopped, hovering and suspended in midair, evidently in some sort of stasis. The intruder used Harry's momentary distraction to disarm Harry. Harry cursed colourfully at yet *another* mistake and turned toward the man and glared.

"Now that I have your attention, Mr. Potter," the man began. His voice was gravelly and deep and Harry didn't recognise it. "I am going to stun you and Obliviate you."

"You're going to try." growled Harry. He made a 'come hither' gesture with his right hand and plucked his wand from the man's grip, and used his other hand to banish him against the wall. "But, you're going to fail. Now," Harry cast a quick anti-apparition ward with his reacquired wand, "*you* are going to tell me what you were doing here."

"There will be no answers for you tonight, Mr. Potter." The man glowered at Harry and pulled something out of his pocket. Harry

made to take it from him but the man muttered, "Activate!" and vanished before Harry could reach for it.

"*Damn it!*" Harry screamed. He had forgotten Portkey wards. "Damn it, damn it, *damn it!*"

Harry blasted the couch to splinters and scraps of cloth before forcing himself to calm down. He cast an over powered *Reparo* on the ruined couch to fix it before dispelling the stasis on Sirius.

Sirius plummeted to the floor and landed with a muffled, 'Oof.' He clambered to his feet and glanced around the room in a panic. "What the hell?" he asked confusedly.

"He got away." Harry grumbled under his breath. "I forgot about Portkeys."

Sirius just stood there and scratched his head. "Well, we all make mistakes-" he began awkwardly.

"Bah!" Harry interrupted Sirius with a wave of his hand. "Help me clean up and look for clues. I want to know who these people are."

Harry and Sirius started repairing the damage to the living room and cleaning the debris. "People?" Sirius asked. "As in more than one; plural?"

"You heard me." Harry said. "A few days ago, I was headed to a Muggle supermarket to pick up some provisions when I noticed that I was being followed by a bloody powerful wizard. As soon as I could, I ducked into the store and lost him and he left soon after. The only thing I got from him was his description and the sound of his voice; a lot like tonight. These people are reckless but good at covering their tracks."

"What was he dressed in?" Sirius asked.

"Muggle clothes, like me. And he wasn't an eyesore like most magical people either."

Harry righted an end table and repaired its broken leg. He was still furious over making a simple mistake such as forgetting to put up anti-Portkey wards and even more so that he was making so many of the simple mistakes. Now that he thought about it, it had all started back when he was Horcrux hunting and forgot that he could flame through any and all wards. As much as he wanted to find out who these people were, he wanted to find out what was behind his sudden clumsiness more.

He went over to the painting of his parents and reawakened them from the dispel and was busy explaining what happened to them when Sirius said, "Harry, I think you should take a look at this..."

"Did you find something?"

"I think so, but... just come take a look."

Harry approached Sirius who was holding a triangular golden pin gingerly in his hands. He handed it to Harry who examined it carefully. An image of a pyramid with an Eye of Horus at its apex was imprinted on the gold. "What is it?" he asked.

"You don't recognise it?" Sirius asked incredulously. Harry shook his head. "It's the symbol of the Illuminatus."

Harry raised an eyebrow at him. "Sirius, you forget how I grew up."

Sirius grinned bashfully. "Right... the Muggles." he said. "The Illuminatus are a secret society that is rumoured to run the world behind the scenes."

Harry suddenly recalled Dudley reading a comic that dealt with something similar, though he couldn't remember the exact name of it. "Oh! Okay, they're rumoured to dabble in the occult and supernatural in the Muggle world." he said. Sirius nodded. "I thought they were called the Illuminati though."

Sirius laughed. "Muggles. They have no idea how close they were. The Illuminatus are a society of wizards that run the world behind the scenes. I always thought they were just a rumour though... I wonder what they want with you."

Harry just sighed. "I wish I knew."

(((o)))

After the living room was back in one piece, Harry made the mistake of telling Sirius what happened after he was hit with the stasis spell and Sirius wouldn't stop gushing about how powerful Harry was. Eventually, Harry had to transform and lock Sirius in his Animagus form to shut him up.

The next night was their scheduled meeting with Hermione and Rose. At 9pm, Harry flamed the two of them to the seventh floor corridor in front of the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy where Hermione was waiting. She had been leaning against the wall with her Arithmancy book when Sirius and Harry appeared in a ball of flame. Hermione shrieked and fell to the ground in fright.

"Oh, lord!" she hissed, clutching her heart.

Sirius couldn't help himself and cracked up. Harry laughed too, thought not nearly as hard as Sirius. "Sorry, Hermione." Harry apologised.

Hermione waved it off, though she did look curious. *Good old Hermione*, Harry thought. *How I've missed her*. "So, are you going to let us in?" Hermione asked.

Sirius looked confused as he glanced around for a door. He even checked behind the tapestry, much to Barnabas' protest. "What? Where?"

Harry chuckled. "That's right, the Marauders never found this room." he muttered to himself. "Didn't Rose tell you how to reveal the room?" he asked Hermione.

Hermione shook her head and Harry paced back and forth thinking about a room to meet with Rose, Hermione and Sirius to have a discussion. The door appeared with the sound of stone and metal grinding and Sirius looked shocked.

“No wonder we didn’t know where it was...” he breathed. “I doubt this room is on the map.”

Harry opened the door. “It’s not.” he said simply. “Welcome to the Room of Requirement, Mr. Padfoot.”

Sirius went into the room quickly, looking much like a kid in a candy store. He spotted his goddaughter standing in the middle of the room, which looked much like the lounge in a posh mansion, concentrating on something. “Rose!” he called, as he strode up to give her a hug.

“Sirius!” she called back, and she gladly accepted the hug. “You made it!”

“I wouldn’t miss you for the world.”

Rose looked behind Sirius after pulling away from the hug. “Harry?” she asked. Harry smiled at her and Rose pounced on him and kissed him deeply. “I missed you.”

“But you saw me this morning.” Harry said, his voice laced with amusement.

“I can still miss you though, can’t I?” Rose asked with wide eyes.

“Of course you can.” Harry said softly.

Rose’s demeanour went from mushy to excited in the blink of an eye. “Harry! I did it! I did it!”

“You did what?” Harry asked.

Rose let go of Harry and backed into the middle of the room. “I can do a full transformation now!”

Hermione came fully into the room. “Really? Can I see?”

Rose nodded, eager to show off, and transformed in to a crimson phoenix with gold tipped feathers, though her feathers were more gold than crimson now. She seemed to smile at the proud look on Harry’s face and the astonished ones on Hermione and Sirius’. Harry

transformed into his form and joined her and they both began to sing. Sirius and Hermione looked to be in ecstasy listening to the duet.

Harry and Rose stopped singing and snuggled closer to each other, but broke apart quickly when Hermione went, "Aw, how cute!"

"Merlin, that's amazing..." Sirius gasped. Hermione nodded in agreement.

Harry and Rose transformed back and joined the other two on the couches then Harry told his story to Sirius and Hermione. He also elaborated on his feelings for Rose and their relationship.

"How couldn't I see it before?" Sirius said, smacking his fist into his palm.

"Eh?"

"The two of you being the same person." Sirius explained. Personally, Harry didn't see how anyone could put it together unless told. "It's rather cool... if creepy."

"But you're okay with it?" Harry asked tentatively. Losing Rose would be the worst thing in the world to him right now.

Sirius nodded, and then said, very seriously, "If you hurt her though..."

"I can take care of myself, Sirius." Rose said as she wrapped her arm around Harry's waist. "Besides, Harry wouldn't dream of hurting me."

Harry didn't need to be told twice. He glanced over at Hermione to gauge her reaction and found her to be lost in thought. Still, he didn't expect any less than for Hermione to ponder every possible angle before making her decision. "You don't seem disturbed by this at all."

"I'm not." she said thoughtfully. "Philosophically, you two are the same person, but technically, and I believe genetically, you are different."

Sirius and Rose both listened raptly, though for different reasons.

“Oh?” Harry asked.

Hermione straightened up and smoothed the skirt of her school uniform, entering what both Rose and Harry liked to call ‘lecture mode’. It meant that they were going to get answers. “It doesn’t seem right to me that there are infinite dimensions with infinite copies of the same person across reality. There has to be some difference between each copy of a person. In Harry’s dimension, Rose was born a boy, but in this dimension, Harry was born a girl. In Harry’s original dimension, I was most likely slightly different from myself here, since Harry is a boy and Rose is a girl.” Harry nodded. “I am willing to theorise that in yet another dimension, I was born a boy and Sirius here may have been a girl. Fundamentally, we are the same people. I believe that their base genetics are different on the molecular level; enough so that they are really two different people from similar parents.”

“And it gives you a chance to try out a new spell you discovered.” Harry said. Rose laughed.

Hermione blushed. “Am I really that transparent?” she asked meekly.

No,” Harry said, “but, I knew my Hermione well enough to know *you* that well. Go ahead and cast the spell.”

But, Hermione being Hermione, she had to explain the spell first. “Now, what *should* happen is you two will glow different colours based on how closely related you two are. White would mean twins. Going down the spectrum, red would be the next step down from white, meaning a child or parent, followed by orange and so on until we get to Violet, meaning very distantly related; like the Malfoys to the Potters.”

Both Harry and Rose winced at the insinuation that they were even distantly related to the ferret, but Hermione ignored them and continued. “Finally, we have grey which would mean not related at all. Now, are you ready?” They nodded and Hermione muttered a Latin phrase while pointing her wand at Rose, then a slightly different one while pointing it at Harry. Harry glowed a light shade of purple.

“See?” Hermione said smugly.

"Never doubted you for a second, 'Mione." Harry said.

Rose squealed as she realised her dream of a family with Harry could become reality. She wrapped him in a rib-cracking hug and showered him with kisses. Hermione waited patiently for Rose to finish before continuing.

"Still, it's rather amazing; you being from another dimension and all." she said.

Sirius nodded and Harry frowned. "I still don't know *why* I'm here, though."

Hermione frowned in thought again and Rose said, "Well, she and I can look into it. The Hogwarts library might have something on dimensional travel."

Harry thought about it then nodded before turning to Sirius. "Padfoot, can you do me a favour?"

Sirius nodded. "Anything."

"Stay with the Order and let Dumbledore know you have my trust. He already knows that I'm from an alternate dimension and is most likely looking into it himself. He might let something slip that I don't know. I need you to tell me everything he tells you."

Sirius saluted Harry.

"Cute... Anyway, I need to do one last thing before I quit monopolising your time." Harry said. "Do either of you know *Occlumency*?"

Sirius nodded happily.

"I've heard of it," said Hermione, "but never attempted it. Is that what you've been teaching Rose?"

Harry nodded. "Amongst other things. Okay, Hermione, I'm going to cast a charm on you that will obscure the memory of this meeting. You'll only be able to talk about it with the three of us. Anyone who looks through your mind won't be able to find it."

Hermione's face looked a mixture between apprehension and excitement. Harry knew that she wanted to know what spell he was going to use.

Harry sighed knowing why she looked apprehensive as well. "It won't hurt. I promise. And I'll teach the spell to you afterward, okay?"

Hermione perked up happily and Harry cast the spell. Hermione winced and clutched her brow. "You said it wouldn't hurt!" she said accusingly. "It feels like a brain freeze..."

Harry laughed. "It'll pass. I guess my definition of painful is a bit different from yours." The pain passed and Hermione glowered at Harry. "I'm sorry." he offered. "Anyway, Hermione, if you want, you can join Rose and me for our morning training and I'll teach you that spell."

Hermione nodded excitedly and they all get up to leave.

"One more thing," Harry said. "Be careful..."

(((o)))

When Sirius and Harry got home, Harry found an owl resting on his dining room table with a letter addressed to him from Dumbledore. The owl glowered him and hooted reproachfully as if to say, 'How dare you not be home!'

"What is it with people glaring at me tonight?" he asked no one in particular as he removed the letter from the bird's leg. The owl rewarded him by nipping a hole in his finger before it flew to wait at the window. "Git!"

Harry opened the letter and sucked his finger while he read.

Dear Mr. Potter,

It has come to my attention that you will be as important in the coming war against Voldemort as Rose will be. I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss your involvement with Rose at your earliest convenience. Please respond post haste.

Sincerely,

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

Harry frowned at the letter as Sirius returned from the toilet. "What's that?" Sirius asked.

Harry handed Sirius the letter and inspected his finger. It had stopped bleeding. "It's Dumbledore's not-so-subtle way of telling me that he wants to meddle again."

Sirius read over the letter and frowned thoughtfully. He was silent a moment before he spoke. "I think you should meet with him." he said.

Harry blinked in shock. "What?" he blurted.

"You heard me." Sirius repeated. Harry just blinked at him in confusion and Sirius hastened to elaborate. "First of all, you said it yourself; he might have some information you can glean from him."

Harry gawked at him incredulously. "What?" he asked for the second time. "Glean? Dumbledore is-"

"Not as smart or covert as he was in your dimension."

Harry's lips pressed into a thin line with his agitation. He didn't think Sirius had it in him to be this perceptive, and he hadn't been one-upped by anyone since his sixth year at Hogwarts. "Still, I don't trust him. I may respect him, but I stopped trusting him after my fifth year."

"Harry," Sirius said with an exasperated sigh, "Dumbledore is best as an ally rather than an enemy."

Harry sighed. Sirius was right and he told his godfather as much. "When should I set up the meeting for?"

A devious smile spread across Sirius' face. One Harry recognised from the Weasley twins, just before they pulled a prank. "Well, I was thinking... how about right after you've beaten the dark tosser?"

Harry couldn't help himself and he laughed. He could imagine the look on Dumbledore's face when he and Rose entered the headmaster's office and told him that Voldemort was dead. Harry penned a quick letter, requesting to schedule the meeting the day after the third task at 9pm. He carefully reattached it to the owl's leg, being careful not to get bitten, and sent the bird on its way laughing all the while.

(((o)))

Rose shouldered her heavy pack with a very unfeminine grunt as she left the charms classroom and set off for her next class. She wasn't looking forward to it, as it was potions and since the incident in October, when Harry had told Snape off using her body, the greasy professor had used every excuse to make her life miserable. He had even tried give her a detention for doing *too* well on a potion and accused her of cheating.

As she walked down into the dungeon, the small hairs on the back of her neck began to tickle and she felt like she was being watched. But the few times the feeling got to her and she whirled around the check, there was nothing there. Though she did think she saw the hem of a robe disappear once or twice. By the time she reached the classroom she felt as paranoid as the fake Moody, and scurried inside as quickly as possible.

Potions, however, was no respite for her today either. They were finishing up the antidotes they had been working on all term, and with the way Snape was hovering over her shoulder, she was sure he was waiting for a moment to make good on his threat earlier during the year and poison her. The pressure got to her so much so that, instead of being a lightish blue per the instructions, her antidote was a deep blackcurrant colour and smelled of boiled mushrooms. Snape made sure to dock Gryffindor 25 points for 'wasting his valuable supplies'.

It didn't help either that she kept seeing a blurry and indistinct form in the corner of her vision. Finally, the stress getting to her, she bolted from the room as soon as the bell rang for lunch. Instead of heading to the great hall for lunch, she went to the kitchens and ate with the

elves. She sincerely hoped that her day would improve from there but it wasn't to be.

When she emerged from the kitchens she was dismayed to find Draco Malfoy waiting for her on the other side of the hallway with his two goons. She sighed and rubbed her temples wearily. She knew that with the way Malfoy was smirking at her, he would be no end of irritating. "What, Malfoy?" she hissed.

"Bit tetchy there, are we?" Draco drawled.

"*What do you want, Malfoy?*"

With a serious expression on his face, Draco pushed off the wall and took a few steps toward Rose. "I just wanted to tell you that I think Professor Snape was wrong."

Rose nearly staggered backward in shock. "What?" *Is Malfoy sympathising with me? Has the world gone loopy?* She was about to say something to the effect of 'thank you', when Malfoy continued.

"I think he should have poisoned you when he had the chance." he sneered.

Good old Malfoy, thought Rose. *I can always count on him to piss me off.* She turned to leave and tried to block Malfoy's grating voice as he simpered on, but his last phrase broke something in her.

"The world would be better off with out yet another Mudblood bollocking things up."

Rose stopped as if she had walked into an invisible wall. She stood there, her shoulders quivering with a nearly uncontrollable rage, her fists clenching and unclenching at her sides as she worked to control it. Inevitably, she lost the battle and she whirled on the Slytherins, her eyes glowing the same colour as her irises.

Crabbe and Goyle quickly went for their wands, but Rose was quicker and with a simple flick of her wand, she banished the two ogres down the corridor all the way into the entrance hall. She couldn't see if they

got back up, and honestly didn't care. All of her ire was focused on the snivelling little ferret before her.

As Draco stumbled getting his wand out of his pocket, Rose twisted and flicked her wand, simultaneously disarming him and suspending him in mid-air in a spread eagle position. She evidently silenced him as well, as his mouth was working furiously and fearfully though no sound was coming out.

"You have gone *too* far this time, Malfoy!" Rose snarled. She wanted, *needed* to hurt him at this point and she ignored the small voice in the back of her mind that must have been her conscience. "I've wanted to do this for so very long."

Rose flicked her wand to the left and Malfoy's eyes momentarily widened before he was smashed bodily into the wall of the corridor with a tooth jarring crunch. He screamed silently but was still unable to move and Rose was sure she had broken his shoulder or maybe a few ribs. The niggling little voice in the back of her head got louder and more insistent, but still she ignored it as she smashed Draco into the opposite wall. She heard his other shoulder break. "Ooh, bet that hurts, doesn't it?"

She let Draco dangle, still ignoring the voice, then decided to finish it and prepared to send the Slytherin head first into the ceiling. But she was startled when someone shouted from behind her, "*Potter!*" and lost concentration on the spell. Draco landed in a crumpled, whimpering heap on the stone floor.

Rose turned around, ready to curse whoever had interrupted her when her conscience finally broke through her haze of rage and flooded her with guilt. She collapsed bonelessly to her knees and buried her face in her hand and began to sob. "Oh god, what have I done?"

As she stared at the floor a pair of buckled black booted entered her vision and she looked up through blurry eyes into the face of a livid Severus Snape. "Take yourself to the headmaster's office, Potter, while I deal with Mr. Malfoy." he said silkily. No insults or names. Rose knew she was in deep, deep trouble.

She picked herself up and shambled mindlessly toward Dumbledore's office, the only thought in her head being how fast she would be expelled. She had nearly killed a student while in a blind rage. Briefly she wondered if she would still have to compete in the tournament, but she dismissed that thought as another, more sinister one entered her head. *Are they gonna send me to Azkaban?*

Suddenly, Rose found herself at the gargoyle and realised that she didn't know that password. She began to absentmindedly list off various sweets before the statue slid to the side when she mentioned gummi-worms. Rose trudged up the stairs and knocked on the wooden door at the top. The headmaster beckoned her to enter and she did, suddenly at a loss for words.

"Ah, Miss Potter," Dumbledore began amiably, "to what do I owe this visit?"

Rose simply stood there, her eyes wide like a rabbit caught in the headlights of an on coming lorry. What was she supposed to say? "Oh, nothing really, professor. I just nearly killed Draco Malfoy in the hall." Yeah, that would go over well. She began to fiddle with the ring on her right hand, the matching one the present she gave Harry for Christmas.

Snape took that moment to storm in to the office like a great bat. "Headmaster," he seethed. "I want Potter expelled for attacking, and nearly killing a student."

Dumbledore looked from Rose to Snape and back again. "Is this true, Rose?" he asked. Despite her new feelings for the aged professor, the disappointment in his voice opened the dam of guilt again. Still at a loss for words, she continued twisting the ring on her finger. Suddenly, she could hear Harry in her mind.

Rose? he asked. **Rose, what's wrong?** Rose had never been so relieved to hear her love's voice. She quickly related the afternoon's events to Harry as Snape became more impatient. There was a moments silence in her head, and when Harry finally spoke, Rose could have sworn he sounded amused and concerned at the same time. **Play apologetic and blame the stress from the upcoming third task.** he told her.

Rose didn't need to be told twice and didn't need to fake the tears coming to her eyes. She nodded to the professors and hung her head with un-faked shame. It may have been Malfoy, but she shouldn't have lost her temper to that extent. "I guess... I was just overstressed from my day, and with the third task only a week away and all..." She trailed off, making sure her memories of the stress of the day were at the forefront of her mind. Snape and Dumbledore were master Legilimens, after all.

She must have been successful with her half-lie, when Snape's eyes narrowed and he 'humph'ed. Still, he was nothing if not argumentative. "I do not believe her, headmaster." he said with an oily voice. Normally, Rose would have glared at the man, but for the sake of her half-act, she kept her head down and eyes on the floor.

Dumbledore was silent for a moment as he considered things. "I do." he said softly. Snape made to argue, but Dumbledore cut him off and continued. "Greater witches and wizards than ourselves have killed themselves with the stress of this tournament. It was for that reason, more so than the actual deaths during the tasks, that the tournament was disbanded."

Snape's face turned red and he seemed fit to explode before Dumbledore said. "Still, her actions do deserve punishment."

Rose was slightly shocked at how fast Snape's attitude changed. He went from livid to pleasantly smug in the blink of an eye.

"One hundred points from Gryffindor and a week's detention with Professor Snape. I also want you to apologise to Mr. Malfoy."

Rose winced but realised that in the scheme of things, she got off easy. Snape seemed to be satiated as well. "Very well," he said. "The detentions will begin the day after the third task. 8pm sharp." And with that he left the office.

Rose bid good-night to the headmaster and followed the potions professor out. As she headed up to the tower, she heard Harry again. ***Did it work?*** he asked.

Yeah... Rose replied in a small voice.

What's wrong, hun?

Rose stopped in the hallway and leaned against the wall wearily. The adrenaline was wearing off and she felt like a nap. Fortunately she had an off period after lunch. ***I nearly killed someone, Harry...*** she said weakly.

There was a lengthy pause before Harry said, ***Meet me in the Room of Requirement.***

Rose immediately felt better, knowing that Harry was going to visit and give her a shoulder to cry on. She didn't know how she knew he wasn't going to be angry with her, but she was certain of it. So it was with a light heart that she made her way to the come-and-go-room.

Chapter 18

That evening, Harry held Rose in the Room of Requirement as she cried the stress of the day away on his shoulder. He had required the room to look like a copy of his living room, the place where he and Rose felt most at ease when he entered, and the two of them were sitting on the couch. They sat in a comfortable silence for a while before Rose broke it.

“What’s happening to me, Harry?” she asked her voice almost too quiet to hear. “Since you’ve arrived, I’ve been... changing.”

Harry had nothing to say, but simply kept his arm around her shoulder.

“And I don’t mean just physically.” she continued. “I mean, I’ve been losing my temper more and more. Little things, like Malfoy calling me ‘Mudblood’ before made me mad, sure... but not to the point that I wanted to kill him.” She stared at her hands and shook her head sadly. “When I confronted Hermione to see if she was reporting to the Headmaster...” She trailed off.

Harry wanted to tell her that was her imagination, but he stopped. He had been noticing a marked change in his personality as well. He was careless and lax, ignoring his training from the other dimension. It had nearly gotten him killed in the bunker and it had let his assailant the other night escape. And he didn’t know Rose from before he had traversed dimensions and didn’t know what she had been like. He had assumed when they first met that Rose was simply fiery.

Not having an answer, he pulled her close and hugged her tight. “I don’t know, Rose. But, I promise to find out.”

Rose hugged him back. “I know Harry. I know.”

(((o)))

Back at his house, it was Harry’s turn to be comforted by his godfather. Sirius sat next to him at the table and kept a comforting arm around his shoulder. Harry had explained the situation to Sirius,

but the older man was just as clueless as to what to do as Harry was. Sirius had suggested going to Dumbledore, but one scathing look from Harry sank that idea before it could even float.

After a while, Harry busied himself with dinner for the two of them. He mulled over the situation as he cooked but the answer kept eluding him. Then, while Harry was busy mashing the potatoes, a black owl flew through his open window and lit on the dining table. Harry eyed it warily thinking it was the same owl that tried to take off his finger, but this one was a bit smaller. The bird held out its talon for Harry to take the letter and he did, cracking the seal and reading it hastily. As he read, his face became paler and paler.

“Harry?” Sirius asked worriedly. “What’s wrong?”

“They’re calling me out.” Harry said, his voice almost too quiet to hear. He tossed the letter on the table and slumped in his chair bonelessly. Sirius picked the piece of parchment up and began to read.

Mr. Potter,

Myself and my associates have arranged a rendezvous at the ‘Sullied Unicorn’ bar in Knockturn Alley. The reason for this rendezvous? We know what you are, who you are, and what you are capable of. This meeting will be held tonight at 8pm. You will come alone.

Watcher

Harry seemed to look up at Sirius hopefully. “What do you think, Sirius?” he asked.

Sirius was silent for a moment. “I think it’s a trap.” he said at length. “I mean, come on! ‘Come alone’? How stupid do they take you for?”

Harry shrugged, not knowing what to think. He had been underestimated before but never before had he been overestimated. He honestly didn’t know how to feel. He glanced up at the clock above his stove. “Well, I only have two hours before the meeting.”

“We.” Sirius corrected.

“No,” Harry said shortly, “I.”

“No, we.” Sirius stressed. “I-”

But Harry cut him off. “You are a wanted man, Sirius!” He nearly snarled. “I won’t have you captured doing something foolish for me.”

“And going alone isn’t foolish?” Sirius countered calmly. Harry noticed with some irony that Sirius, the hot-headed one was keeping his cool, while Harry was losing his. “One, it’s Knockturn Alley. I’m sure people are wondering why I haven’t been spotted there yet. And two, I won’t have you captured or worse because you were too stubborn to take back up.”

“I...” Harry was at a loss for words. He scowled down at hands. It had been so long since he had last been reprimanded by an adult that he didn’t know how to react. He was used to working on his own, but Sirius’ concerns made him feel strangely light and relieved.

“Harry, this concerns my godchildren.” Sirius said. Harry looked up sharply. “Yes, I said ‘children’. You might be rather new to me, but you are still Prongs and Lily’s child, and I do care for you.”

Harry couldn’t help the gratified smile that grew on his face.

“Besides,” Sirius continued, “I don’t want to imagine what Rose would do to me when she found out that I let you go alone.”

The two men had a good chuckle out of that. Harry could imagine Rose slapping Sirius up side the head and calling him a few choice names. “Okay, fine. But you stay in your dog form unless absolutely necessary, clear?”

Sirius nodded sombrely, no trace of the prankster in his expression.

(((o)))

“This place reeks...” Harry muttered as he waved his hand in front of his nose.

The 'Sullied Unicorn' was one of the lower class, dingier establishments in Knockturn Alley, and the atmosphere certainly proved it. Various people and creatures of ill repute sat in the darkened corners enjoying their drinks and talking in hushed voices. Cigar and pipe smoke made the air hazy and thick, and Harry could swear he smelled something akin to rotting flesh. Some patrons stopped what they were doing to look at the man and his dog that just entered the pub but soon went back to their conversations as Harry hurried to a secluded booth in the back of the room.

"Why, of all places, did we have to meet here?" Harry continued to mutter to himself as he sat down. Padfoot plopped down ungracefully under the table at his feet. "We stick out like sore thumbs..."

Padfoot growled at him and Harry shut up.

Harry fidgeted in his seat while waiting on the mysterious 'Watcher' to show up. Never one to be patient, Harry occupied his time by occluding his mind and organising his thoughts. He was still a bit shaken by how careless he had been since his arrival in this dimension. It was while he was sorting his memories and thoughts of Rose that a man in a dark maroon robe slid into the booth opposite him. Harry regarded him with a wary eye.

"Mr. Potter." the man said. "Mr. Black."

Padfoot made an odd little choking noise under the table and Harry sighed. So much for anonymity... "You must be 'Watcher'," Harry said. He discretely drew his wand and levelled under the table at the man's abdomen. "Well, I'm here. Spill it."

Watcher smiled behind his hood. "You will not need your wand tonight, Mr. Potter." he said. Harry noticed that he had the same gravely voice as the stalker and the man in his house. It was most likely voice a masking charm. "I have called you here tonight because you want answers."

Harry made no motion but raised his Legilimency to its full strength. Hopefully he could catch any lies this man said. "Go on..."

"The first thing you should know," Watcher said, "is that you were summoned here." Harry's eyebrows raised but he remained silent. He didn't know that you could summon people like demons and frankly, the thought disturbed him.

"Unfortunately," Watcher continued, "something went wrong with the ritual. You were not supposed to have arrived until June 4th 1996."

Harry frowned as he pondered this. The date rung a bell in his mind but try as he might he couldn't place it. He felt the dog at his feet tense up and he glanced down to see if Padfoot... Harry's eyes widened and his heart felt like it was in his throat. That was the date that Sirius had fallen through the veil in Harry's original dimension. "Why then?" he managed to choke out.

Harry could almost swear that Watcher seemed forlorn. "It is the day Rose is to die. We do not know how, but she-"

"No." Harry said shortly. Padfoot growled angrily. Harry felt his magic surge much like it did before a battle.

Watcher seemed to go from apologetic to malicious in the blink of an eye. "You don't have any say in the matter, Potter!" he sneered.

Harry struggled to keep both his magic and his temper in check but it was hard. "Bullshit, I don't." he said. His voice was louder than he wanted it to be but he didn't really care. "I'm here now. She can be protected. She doesn't need to-"

Watcher interrupted him. "Stow the naivety, Potter!" he snarled. "Do not meddle in things you don't understand!"

"Why, then?" Harry growled back. "Tell my why she has to die."

"Surely you've noticed changes in your personalities. Perhaps you are becoming lazy, or careless. We know for a fact that Rose's temper is spiralling out of control. This is because the two of you are sharing a soul. Your bodies fight for it, both wanting the soul in it's entirety, but you both are powerful enough; you, through your magical core and Rose, through the prophecy. This struggle is tearing the very fabric of reality apart."

The more Harry thought about it, the more it made sense. The primal connection he and Rose shared; the occasional, unexplainable shocks that occurred when they touched; it was all because they were sharing a soul. But Harry had to wonder; what happened to his soul? Why hadn't it come across to this dimension with him? He managed to rein his anger in and asked, "There has to be some other way."

Watcher's attitude remained the same; condescending and arrogant. "There is not. What part of 'Rose must die' do you not comprehend?"

Harry's anger returned full force. He knew that the only thing keeping Padfoot from ripping the man's throat out was Harry's presence, but there was nothing holding Harry back but his own force of will. He desperately wanted to hurt Watcher. "There must be some other way." he bit out through clenched teeth. "I refuse to let her die."

"Oh, she will die." Watcher said in a whisper. "And there is nothing you or Black can do to stop it."

For the first time since he was a child, Harry lost control of his magic. It surged outward from him, overturning tables and patrons alike and scorching the walls and floor. His eyes glowed, and his voice seemed to boom from everywhere at once as he hissed, "You dare harm a hair on her head and nothing short of the apocalypse will stop my vengeance!"

Watcher apparated away with wide eyes, leaving a puddle behind on the booth. It seemed he had wet himself in fear. Even Padfoot's hackles were raised as he stared at Harry fearfully.

Harry blinked once and surveyed the destruction of the pub. While not a clean place to begin with, his magic burst had turned the place into a wreck. Half the lamps had gone out and debris littered the floor. The patrons, just now climbing to their feet, started to draw their wands and other weapons. Harry reached down, grabbed Padfoot by the scruff of his neck and flamed the two of them back to his house.

Sirius transformed back as soon as he regained his feet. "Bloody hell, Harry! What was that!?"

Harry took one look at Sirius and broke down in laughter. "Look at your hair!"

Sirius' hair was still standing on end. It wasn't his hackles that had been raised; it was the burst of accidental magic Harry had released in the pub. Sirius unsuccessfully tried to smooth his long hair back down before giving up and addressing Harry again. "Be serious." he said. Harry opened his mouth to say something, most likely along the lines of, 'I cant, you are,' but Sirius ploughed on. "And don't you dare crack a joke."

Harry wisely shut his mouth but couldn't stop the occasional giggle from slipping out.

"Now," Sirius went on, frowning at Harry's giggles, "what was that all about?"

Harry took a deep breath to calm himself. "The magic burst?" he asked. Sirius nodded and Harry shrugged. "I have no idea. I just got really angry when he said Rose had to die."

Sirius frowned. "What are you going to tell her?" he asked.

Harry stood there in silence for a minute. He thought about how he would have taken the news that he was to die. He knew that in his fourth year, he wouldn't have taken it well at all. "Nothing." he said at length. Everything he was screamed that he was no better than Dumbledore, but he didn't want to force this knowledge on Rose. "The less she knows the better..."

(((o)))

"Are you ready for this?" Harry asked.

Rose fidgeted at his side taking what comfort she could from the arm around her shoulders. It was approaching midnight and the two of them were at Potter Manor standing at the door to the rune chamber. This was the day that Harry had set for her entry into the room. Truthfully, she was nervous as hell. Despite the late hour she wouldn't have been able to sleep if she wanted too. And, through the

link their rings gave them, she could tell that Harry was too. "What if I said I wasn't?" she asked with a shaky voice.

"Then we don't have to do it." Harry said simply. "I don't... Nothing will go wrong. If your Dad says it's safe, then it's safe."

"Our Dad." Rose corrected almost subconsciously. "I need to do this." she said. She didn't want it, actually. It would be just one more thing to set her apart from everyone else, but she knew she needed every advantage she could get in the upcoming third task and fight with Voldemort. It still stung a bit that Harry wouldn't let her help kill the Dark Lord but she understood why. It was bad enough that she would have to kill Voldemort. She didn't like the idea of taking a life, no matter how vile and black that life may be.

Harry pulled her closer to him and gave her a one armed hug. "Are you sure?"

Rose nodded. "I'm sure." She pushed him lightly away, her nervous expression giving way to a playful smile. "Now, go away so I can strip."

Harry pouted. "I can't watch?"

"No, go away."

Rose watched as Harry hurried down the hall and around the corner wondering if she should be scandalised that he didn't want to see her naked or happy that he respected her privacy. She settled on a mixture of both and the decision that she was going to snog him senseless the next time they were alone. She quickly stripped naked, shivering in the cold, dungeon air and hurried into the run chamber, closing the door behind her.

The chamber was simply a round room made of grey stone bricks and about ten feet in diameter. She saw faint symbols etched into the stone all over the walls. Without her phoenix enhanced vision she figured that she wouldn't have been able to see the light grey runes. The ceiling of the chamber was domed and made of the same grey stone that the walls were made of but it only had one big rune carved

into the apex. Not for the first time, Rose wished she had taken Ancient Runes instead of Divination.

“Rose?” Harry’s voice was muffled by the thick wooden door. Rose nearly jumped out of her skin. She hadn’t expected him to say anything.

“I’m fine, Harry.” she said.

“Okay. Make yourself comfy. I’m going to activate the room.”

Rose sat with her legs folded underneath her in the centre of the room. She could hear a muffled incantation from Harry and wondered what would happen. Then one by one, the runes starting at the bottom of the room began to glow with a soft golden light. She noticed as they lit that the runes spiralled up in a clockwise pattern to the apex where they met with the larger rune. The apex rune flared golden with a loud gong and Rose averted her eyes quickly. Then she was lost in the light and absolute bliss.

After activating the chamber Harry went back upstairs, his thoughts impure and full of naked redheads. He exited the dungeons into the kitchen where Sirius was brooding. He was pining over a half empty glass of fire whisky. Harry hadn’t known either Sirius long enough to know what exactly was bothering him, but he knew people well enough at this point to tell that something was bothering him. “Okay, spill it. What’s wrong?”

Sirius looked up from his glass with a start. He hadn’t realised that Harry was in the room with him. “What makes you think anything is wrong?” he asked. Harry knew he was lying when he looked away to the left. Harry raised an eyebrow at him and Sirius let out a long suffering sigh. “I was just thinking about what that bloke in the pub said earlier today.”

Harry fetched himself a glass and poured some of the whiskey in it. He took a sip before talking. “About Rose dying?” he said.

Sirius winced at Harry’s totally indifferent attitude and nodded. He floundered about for some words before settling on, “I mean... they’re the Illuminatus.”

Harry shrugged. "They are still only human." he said. "And I promised Rose that I would always keep her safe. For ever and ever." Harry stopped talking as if that last statement explained everything, which to him, it did. He took another sip of his whiskey and noticed Sirius' incredulous stare. "What?"

"You're only human too, Harry." Sirius said softly.

Harry frowned and was about to say something along the lines of, 'not everyone thinks so', when James' portrait came huffing and puffing into a frame in the kitchen. It occurred to Harry that a portrait being out of breath was stupid, but he shelved that thought as James caught his breath. "The Order is having a meeting." he said.

"Why didn't they inform Sirius?" Harry asked.

James looked sheepish. "It's *about* Sirius." he said. "They think he's been compromised."

Sirius smiled ruefully and slammed back the rest of his whiskey, wincing as the harsh liquid burned his throat. "Well, technically, I have. I go where Rose and Harry go." He shrugged. "Oh well. I'm safe here."

Harry sighed and massaged his temples. "Well, have your uncle keep an eye and report everything they discuss." he ordered.

James nodded. "So far, it has all been about what to do about you. The Headmaster wants to mobilise the Order to get Rose back and bring you into custody."

"Merlin's hairy fucking balls!" Harry cursed, throwing his alcohol glass down shattering it. "That old wanker can not leave well enough alone, can he?"

"He's had a rough day." Sirius stage whispered to James.

"I can see that." the portrait muttered.

Harry stared angrily at the ruined glass for half a minute before repairing it with a wave of his hand. He caught it as it flew up to meet

him. His watch then beeped at him and he smirked. "I guess Rose has cooked long enough. Shall we go see what she ended up with?"

(((o)))

Rose fidgeted nervously as she awaited the start of the third task. It had taken her the better part of the last week for her to get her new supercharged magical core under control. She honestly didn't remember much of the ritual. She remembered the runes flaring bright, and then waking up slowly and securely in Harry's arms as he took her home to recuperate. At the time, she realised that she was naked, covered only by Harry's cloak and she didn't care. Now though her cheeks nearly glowed she was blushing so furiously. She knew that eventually she wanted Harry to see her in all her glory, but then was not the appropriate time.

At first she didn't believe Harry when he told her that her magic would be all wonky and she told him as much. Harry simply smirked and let her get dressed for dinner. It was then that she believed him. She got dressed normally but decided to prove Harry wrong and summon her shoes to her from across the room.

She cast the spell as normal and had to throw herself to the floor as the footwear rocketed toward her, intent on bludgeoning her senseless. The shoes then slammed into the wall, cracking the plaster. She had waved her wand again and muttered a simple Reparo charm and nearly choked as the wall was restored to pristine condition.

Her lessons for the first three days were simply getting to know her magic again. She had finally managed to get it under control that Sunday and she was amazed at how much more powerful she was. She felt near invulnerable but Harry quickly squashed that feeling by telling her that Voldemort, Dumbledore and himself were still more powerful. She would have glared at Harry but he seemed so reluctant to talk of his power she couldn't stay angry.

Her Animagus transformation came quicker now too. The feathers of her phoenix form had gone from solid gold with red tips to a pristine white with gold and red tips. Harry explained that a phoenix's plumage followed a fire's heat color scheme. A red phoenix was the

least powerful, where as a white, and then blue phoenix was the most powerful of the species. He also said that it had a lot to do with her new magical core.

She spent the next two days after that finding out what the chamber gifted her with. It turned out that her father only got a slightly stronger core and no other powers. At first she was worried until Harry explained that he was sure the prophecy had something to do with his extra powers and it would do the same for Rose. They hadn't had any luck. Perhaps it hadn't manifested yet, Harry said.

Oh well. Rose didn't really care one way or another. She was different enough as it was. The only reason she didn't protest more was that Harry was as different as she was. She could share with him.

Harry had decided to keep her at his house instead of sending her back to the school after the ritual. It turned out that Dumbledore was going to bring her back and arrest Harry for kidnapping. Harry said that as long as he was being accused of the crime, he may as well commit it. The day before the task, she had flamed back directly into her dorm room startling Hermione so badly that the bushiness of her hair seemed to double. She told Hermione everything, swearing the other girl to secrecy before heading down into the Great Hall. She smirked remembering the Headmaster's reaction.

Rose was startled from her reminiscing by a hand on her shoulder. It took all her will power not to whip her wand out and curse the person, and even more when she realised that it was the fake Moody. "Are you ready, lass?" he asked.

Because of her huge point lead, Rose was being given a thirty second head start. Not that she needed it. She had reviewed Harry's memories and remembered exactly where the cup should be. She could get a decent way into the maze, flame there, and be ported away to the graveyard. She realised that she hadn't answered Moody and nodded.

"Nerves?" he asked with a crooked grin. Rose nodded again.

She looked over at Dumbledore who met her gaze with a disapproving one of his own. She ignored it, much like she had the night before and tried not to smirk as Dumbledore's frown grew.

"Go left first." Moody muttered. Rose ignored him too.

Then came the shot from Bagman's wand signalling that she should start. She sprinted into her entrance and rounded the first corner running a bit further before concentrating on the location of the cup. She disappeared then reappeared in a burst of flame and froze in shock.

The room was empty!

Chapter 19

It hadn't taken Harry long to set up the trap for the Death Eaters. He had a few things to do beforehand, like cluing Dumbledore in on the real identity of his DADA teacher and explaining to Rose just why she needed to get the cup instead of flaming directly to Harry (if she flamed there, it might spook Voldemort. As far as Harry knew, Voldemort was unaware of, or underestimating Rose's power), but soon he was on his way. After scouting the graveyard for any sign of Wormtail or Voldemort, he set about casting his spells. He had set a series of wards in concentric circles around where the cauldron was set up. The wards were programmed, so to speak, to cast a powerful if somewhat dark stasis charm on anyone and everyone within the ward when he spoke the activation word. He wanted it to be something along the lines of, 'Riddle Sucks,' but figured that enraging Voldemort wouldn't be very good for his pending health. So instead he settled for the dull, boring, 'Wards Activate'. Sirius was greatly disappointed in him.

He was sure, however, that Voldemort would be able to throw the stasis off, if he was affected at all. He was hoping beyond hope that the Dark Lord would be frozen. He didn't fancy another long and grueling fight with Voldemort, but he was prepared for it none the less.

"Is the ritual site prepared, Wormtail?"

Glad that he had hidden himself under his invisibility cloak, Harry couldn't suppress the shudder that Voldemort's unnaturally high voice elicited from him, nor Wormtail's close proximity. They brought back so many painful memories. He ruthlessly smothered them behind his Occlumency shields.

"Yes, my lord," Pettigrew simpered.

"And you are sure that you performed every spell to secure the site as well?" There was a hint of venom in Voldemort's voice that made Harry pause. Certainly he wouldn't be able to sense any of Harry's wards...

"Yes, my lord," Pettigrew simpered. He sounded like a broken record.

“Then why, pray tell, do I sense ambient magic?”

Harry’s breath hitched in his throat. *He knows!* Harry thought in a panic. He started backing out of the graveyard quickly. He needed to make it to a safe enough place to flame away and warn Rose, but Voldemort continued.

“But, no matter,” he hissed. “It is not like I have a choice in the matter, do I?” Voldemort’s voice sounded very bitter, Harry thought, but Harry’s heart stopped hammering in his chest. He crept back toward the ritual site all the while berating himself for panicking. He ignored Wormtail’s sniveling attempts to gain favor with his master and resumed his hiding spot amongst the grave markers.

Harry!

Harry nearly fell over in shock as Rose’s voice sounded deafeningly in his head. *But I don’t have my ring on.* He thought in confusion. He had taken it off before flaming to the graveyard because he didn’t want to take any chances that Voldemort would be able to detect any magic in the area. Voldemort had been, but that was beyond the point. Right now, Harry was worried about why and how Rose was mindspeaking with him. He patted the pockets of his pants silently then checked the pockets of his dragon hide battle robes. No ring. Just to be sure, he checked his fingers, feeling each one. No ring. Then how...?

He shook his head. It didn’t matter. Somehow, Rose had found a way to contact him and she sounded very close to panic. He concentrated hard on her and thought, **Rose? Can you hear me?**

Thank Merlin it worked! Rose exclaimed back. Harry was about to ask what was wrong when Rose plowed on. **Harry, the cup isn’t here!**

Harry’s heart started hammering again. All his plans hinged on Rose getting the cup before Cedric did. Hundreds of ‘what if’s’ whirled through his mind, the first and foremost being, ‘did someone know?’ He shook himself mentally. He needed to focus. **Okay, Rose. I’m almost positive that the cup is at the far end of the maze.** He tried his damndest to remember which direction the maze ran and came

up with a blank. But an idea did take form. **Rose, look up. Can you see the sky?**

Yes, came Rose's answer.

I want you to change and flame up as high as you can. When you get there look down and tell me what you see. He waited a moment before Rose replied.

It looks like one huge hedge. I can't see any of the maze.

Harry cursed colorfully, thankfully all in his head. He could feel Rose's indignation at his language but she remained silent. If he was correct, there was an obscurity and befuddlement charm cast over the top of the maze. Dumbledore was craftier than Harry gave him credit for. **Which end is the far end from where you started?**

Rose was silent for a few seconds. **Uh...the...north end I think.**

Okay. Flame back and work your way north. You know the *point me* spell? Harry felt Rose's confirmation. **Hurry Rose. I love you.**

I love you too, Harry.

Now all Harry had to do was wait.

((o))

Rose reappeared in the leafy room she had just left in a burst of golden fire. It had been a spur of the moment decision to contact Harry, but she was glad he had kept his on instead of removing it. She didn't know what she would have done if he hadn't been there. Most likely she would have gotten lost and wandered about the maze fruitlessly. Cedric would have gotten the cup and gotten killed again and Harry would be disappointed with her.

"Point me north," she said. Her wand spun on the palm of her hand finally coming to rest pointing at the far hedge of the room. She frowned in frustration.

"Of course," she grouched. A quick idea struck her. She leveled her wand at the hedge and said, "*Reducto!*"

She poured everything she had into the blasting spell. Harry had told her that Dumbledore himself had raised the hedge maze and the walls were sure to be resistant to magic. The blast of white light struck the foliage with a huge explosion...and did absolutely nothing.

"Dammit!" Rose growled. Now she would have to backtrack.

She exited the room and took every side passage the led north. More often than not the passage led to a dead end, but one paid off. She took that one and immediately wished she hadn't. She walked a few paces down making sure she kept her bearings but then she was hit with a horrid case of vertigo. The hedges began to spin and she stopped to regain her balance. The moment her feet stopped moving, the roots of the hedges erupted from the ground and began to wrap around her legs.

She shrieked and began to cut them off of herself with cutting curses and as soon as she was able to, she took off at a sprint. The roots followed her at a quick pace and eventually over took her. This time they enveloped her faster than she could cut them off. She began to panic. The roots started dragging her into the soft soil at her feet. *Well...I tried.* She thought forlornly.

She was then struck with a sudden inspiration. One she was immediately grateful that Harry would *never* know about. She violently flamed two feet to her right and the roots vaporized. After that, the hedges were hesitant to get near her. She thought they even arched *away* from her.

"*Point me north.*"

Rose uneventfully continued in the direction her wand indicated until she came to another large, round room in hedges. This one had a sandstone pedestal set in the middle. Resting on that pedestal was a human headed lion. A sphinx.

The creature had her eyes closed and looked to be sleeping. Rose didn't want to wake her so she crept around toward the exit at the far end of the room. She was startled when the sphinx spoke.

"You may not pass until you have answered my riddles," she said in lilting tones.

Rose paused. She debated just running past the sphinx but she didn't know if that would disqualify her. She technically already cheated by flaming to the center of the maze. "Um...how many have been by?" she asked.

"You are the first."

Rose couldn't help but feel a little pride at that statement, despite her *cheating*. She figured that she was still well ahead of the other competitors and a few riddles wouldn't hurt. Besides, she had Harry to help. "Okay then. Riddle away."

"It's said we all have one
those who believe never doubt
that everyone's included
no one is left out.
We also say it to mean there's only one
and spelled quite differently
we use it to run.
But wait; don't be confused
I'll give you some pity.
When spoken out loud
it's the name of a city."

Rose's mind immediately went blank. *Bloody hell, she was terrible at riddles.* It was Hermione's expertise. After all, the bushy haired girl had solved Snape's logic puzzle their first year. **Harry?**

Yeah?

Rose retold the riddle to Harry.

Harry groaned. **Oh hell, you're at the sphinx. I hated that part...** He was silent for a moment before he answered. **A soul.**

Are you sure? Rose asked. Harry growled at her. **Fine, fine!**

"A soul," she answered out loud.

The sphinx smiled at her, and she knew Harry had been right.

"I turn everything around, yet I do not move," the sphinx then drawled.

Immediately, the Mirror of Erised popped into her mind. "A mirror," she said with certainty, though she didn't like the direction the riddles were taking.

"Very good. Now for the last riddle.

"A nightmare for some. For others, as a savior I come. My hands, cold and bleak, it's the warm hearts they seek."

A cold chill ran down Rose's spine. She knew the answer. It was 'death'. What chilled her though, was her memory of how Harry's sphinx's riddles told a kind of prophecy. His three riddles spelled out spyder, and Harry later ran into an acromantula in the maze. One of the riddles, the one about the spy even foretold Snape's role in the war. Well, perhaps if you stretched it a bit.

Her riddles were incredibly bleak looking.

"Death."

"You may pass."

Rose hurried away from the creepy sphinx and resumed taking every north passage. She realized that it was a very inefficient way of finding the end, but she didn't know any other way. Finally she found the home stretch. She could see the Tri-wizard Cup glimmering at the far end of the final corridor. Her chest tightened as she remembered what lay ahead.

Voldemort.

She took a moment to steel herself before jogging down the passage. She didn't get very far.

"Stop right there, Potter." Someone said from behind her. She instinctively knew that the person had their wand leveled at her back.

It was Cedric. She turned around slowly. Cedric looked worse for wear. His robes were tattered and he had dirt smudges all over his face. His left arm sported a long gash down it. "Hello, Diggory," she said. Her voice was so neutral it had no inflection in it.

"I can't let you have that cup, Potter. You weren't even supposed to be a champion. I won't let you steal the glory from Hufflepuff." Cedric said. "Let me pass and I won't hurt you."

Rose couldn't help herself and chuckled softly. "I'm sure," she said. "I can't let *you* touch that cup, Cedric. You'll die."

"You're threatening me?" Cedric asked incredulously.

"No..." Rose started to explain, but Cedric fired a stunner at her with a nasty look on his face. Rose threw up a wandless shield and drew her wand.

What followed was one of the most intense duels Rose had ever experienced. Technically, it was her first duel, but Harry had trained her well. Cedric was much better than she ever gave him credit for. In the narrow corridor they were fighting in, she was unable to use her agility to dodge, but Cedric was casting to incapacitate her. Thus, her shields worked fine. She was also more powerful than Cedric by far, and it only took one overpowered bludgeoning hex to drop his shield, followed by a stunner to take him out of the game.

Rose bound him in ropes for good measure before taking his wand. "*Periculum*," she cast with his wand. She dropped it back on his chest before trotting down the corridor to the cup. She heard the maze remove Cedric behind her but she was singularly focused on her goal. Her lips were dry as she stared at the glowing crystal cup and she licked them shakily. As she reached out for it, she hoped Harry knew what she was doing.

(((o)))

Harry looked up with a start as Rose appeared in the graveyard and collapsed to the ground heavily. The cup, with the return portkey they thankfully didn't need, clattered a good distance away. He watched as Rose pulled her self to her feet and staggered slightly. He was proud of her ability to play it weak. At least he hoped she was playing.

Any minute now, he thought.

Sure enough, Wormtail swooped from the shadows with Voldemort the homunculus in his arms. "Bind her!" Voldemort shrieked.

Pettigrew cast a spell that shot black cords from Voldemort's wand and tied Rose rather tightly against Riddle Sr.'s tombstone. Rose grunted with the impact and Harry was sure the fear reflected in her eyes was no act. He sent waves of comfort through the link that Rose had somehow reestablished *without* the rings and Rose calmed imperceptibly. *Good, good. Just like we planned, Rose. It'll be over soon.*

Pettigrew jumped right into the ritual, dumping Voldemort's fetus like body in to the roiling cauldron. He turned to Rose with a sneer that the girl returned defiantly. It shook Pettigrew slightly as he levitated a bone from the open grave that Rose was standing on. She kicked at him.

"Let me go so I can kick your traitorous arse!" she growled.

Pettigrew scampered back to the cauldron. "Bone of the father, unknowingly given, you will renew your son!" he chanted, dropping the femur in.

Harry had often had flashbacks and dreams about this moment. He was sure at this point, despite his solid Occlumency that he would have horrible nightmares tonight.

Pettigrew then shakily withdrew a gleaming silver dagger from the folds of his robes. "Flesh—of the servant—w-willingly given—you will—revive—your master."

Both Harry and Rose couldn't help but wince as Pettigrew willingly and brutally removed his hand, letting it drop into the mixture. Harry

was sure that at *his* Voldemort's rebirth, Peter had screamed, but this Peter didn't. *I hope you bleed to death, you wanker.* He knew he couldn't let Pettigrew die, though. He was needed alive to prove Sirius' innocence.

"B-blood of the enemy . . . forcibly taken . . . you will ... resurrect your foe." Pettigrew shakily used the knife to slice into Rose's arm. To her credit she didn't as much as wince.

Pettigrew shook the blood into the cauldron with immediately started to boil and froth, sickly violet and red light shooting forth from the mixture. Harry lowered the invisibility cloak from his head and locked eyes with Rose. **Safe distance.** He sent. Rose nodded and flamed away silently. Harry saw her reappear and hide behind a mausoleum about 100 feet away. Satisfied, he raised the hood back over his head and took his place where Rose was.

Voldemort rose slowly and dramatically from the cauldron, naked as the day he was born. His hands roamed his new body, seemingly delighting in the fact that the ritual had worked.

Harry observed silently from Riddle's grave. Rose's blood had a different effect on this Voldemort than Harry's had on his. This Voldemort's body was defiantly more feminine. Where as Harry's dark lord had been skeletally thin, this one was curvy, almost androgynous and had a full head of short white hair. He still had the slits for a nose, and the same red, angry eyes as before.

"Robe me, Wormtail," Voldemort said, his voice barely above a whisper. A rather feminine whisper, Harry noticed with some amusement. As Pettigrew scuttled forward with Voldemort's black robes, Harry slowly and silently removed his invisibility cloak and wandlessly banished it back to his cloak. It was almost time to make his appearance.

"Give me your arm, Wormtail." Wormtail simpered and raised his stump. "Your *other* arm."

Harry noted with some satisfaction that so far everything was proceeding as it had before, other than androgynous Voldemort. He watched impassively as Voldemort used Peter's dark mark to

summon the rest of his inner circle. As soon as they all had apparated in, Harry whispered, "*Wards activate.*"

They worked perfectly, freezing all the death eaters in place, but not the dark lord unfortunately. Voldemort was oblivious as he swooped around calling each of them by name. He even went through the spiel about one being dead and one lost forever. Harry chuckled lightly, and Voldemort heard it.

"I almost forgot to introduce our guest of honor," he sneered. "Rose..." He whirled around and froze, almost as if the wards had affected him late.

Harry wiggled his fingers in a mock wave. "Now I know I'm pretty," he drawled. "But I'm nowhere near as pretty as her."

"Kill him!" Voldemort shrieked to his death eaters. His eyes flashed red and his white hair nearly stood on end. Nothing happened. "You dare ignore me?"

"Oh they're not ignoring you," Harry said as he stepped away from the tombstone. He silently drew his wand and called the Sword of Gryffindor to him. He willed the sword into a smaller blade that he could dual-wield with his wand. He was sure he was overreacting, but with the physical changes to this Voldemort he didn't want to take any chances. "They can't act. You see, I set a trap for you and your merry band of morons."

"Bah!" Voldemort sneered, leveling his wand at Harry. "I'll do it myself! It will be a good test of my new body."

"Now that's what I like to hear!" Harry cheered. Inwardly, he was unsure if he should be relieved or scared that Voldemort, knowing nothing about him, perceived him to be a threat. "Light or dark meat?" he asked suddenly and seriously.

Voldemort, taken completely by surprise by the question lowered his wand slightly. "What?"

That was the only cue Harry needed. He slashed his wand from left to right and a wave of black and violet energy raced toward the dark lord.

Voldemort's eyes widened marginally and he raised a glimmering white shield that the energy slammed against. The resulting explosion threw up a cloud of dirt and debris that Harry used to get closer to Voldemort. He came out of the cloud sword first. Voldemort twisted out of the way but was slightly slow, and Harry's sword clipped his shoulder drawing first blood. Harry said as much.

"First blood to me," he snarled.

Voldemort's eyes narrowed. "You are better than I first gave you credit for, boy."

"You said that the last time I killed you too."

Voldemort, always one for formalities, sank into a shallow bow that Harry returned. As soon as Harry had straightened, Voldemort attacked. He sent a flurry of lightning fast spells at Harry that Harry had a difficult time dodging. The ones that he was unable to dodge he managed to parry with his wand, physically moving the spell away from him. When he recovered, he noticed a flurry of dull metal darts flying at him. Unable to dodge the spread and unable to parry the spell with his wand, Harry conjured a huge, half ton slab of granite in the way and banished it at Voldemort. The darts impacted into the stone and Harry noticed with some satisfaction that Voldemort was unable to stop the granite's flight and he was forced to dive out of the way. Harry simply redirected the slab in the direction that Voldemort had dived. Voldemort was forced to destroy the rock with a blasting curse. Harry smiled viciously.

The granite, instead of completely blasting to powder, exploded into small, golf ball to baseball sized chunks that Harry joyously flung at Voldemort. Voldemort retaliated by casting a spell that made him slightly incorporeal, allowing the rocks to pass harmlessly through him. Harry frowned. *So much for that idea...*

As soon as the barrage of stones ended, Voldemort waved his wand, canceling the spell on him and launched into the offensive. Harry easily managed to deflect and redirect all the spells with his wand or the sword as he spun and maneuvered his way closer to the dark lord. As soon as he was close enough, he lunged with another stab. This time thought, Voldemort was ready. He conjured the same silver,

snake emblem shield that Harry saw in the atrium and blocked Harry's strike. Harry wasn't ready for that and his blade skittered wide across the shield, staggering him and leaving him wide open. Voldemort threw his arms wide, and with a shout, blasted Harry away 50 feet into the side of a mausoleum.

One all... Harry thought dazedly as he shook his head. He staggered to his feet and looked around the graveyard for his opponent, but he couldn't see Voldemort anywhere. He knew the dark lord was still here, though, because he could *feel* him. "Come out, come out, wherever you are..." he sing-songed.

Suddenly, he sensed Voldemort to his left, near the rubble of the slab. With a wide sweep of his wand, he transfigured all the rocks into muggle cherry bombs with a *very* short fuse. He knew that it wouldn't hurt Voldemort much if at all, but it might just distract him enough to get in a stronger spell to finish the fight.

The fire crackers went off with staccato *bangs* all around Voldemort. Unfortunately, Harry forgot about the gunpowder smoke. Voldemort used the concealment to fire his first *Avada Kedavra* of the fight at Harry. Harry thought was ready. He quickly enlarged the Sword of Gryffindor into a great sword and gripped it with two hands. He swung it like a baseball bat and hit the killing curse directly back at the dark lord. The sword unfortunately disintegrated in his hands, but Harry knew he could call it back. It was only temporarily gone.

Voldemort was completely taken by surprise and was forced to drop bodily to the ground. Harry flicked his wand up and tossed Voldemort bodily into the air, then with a downward flick, sent him rocketing toward the ground. Voldemort pushed all his magic into stopping himself and did so successfully, but it winded him. Harry knew that the fight was nearly over. Still, Riddle was a crafty and powerful wizard and still had a trick up his sleeve.

"It ends *now*, boy!" He whipped his wand in a ring above his head conjuring a goodly amount of *Fiendfyre* that he transfigured into a massive, flaming basilisk. It was the same spell he used in the atrium against Dumbledore. Harry assumed that Voldemort was pulling out

his big guns now. Harry was also without a clue as to how to combat *Fiendfyre*. It was one of his few weaknesses.

During his war, Voldemort discovered that Harry was unable to do anything against the demonic fire and instructed his entire inner circle to use it against Harry. It was nearly Harry's undoing until he decided to stop stunning and start killing. But he wasn't a phoenix animagus at that point either.

Struck with a sudden inspiration as the flaming serpent bore down on him. He didn't know what phoenix fire would do when pitted against *fiendfyre* and decided to find out. He rapidly phoenix flashed in the same spot over and over, building up as much flame as possible before molding it into his own serpent that he sent at Voldemort's massive basilisk. Harry's smaller snake coiled around Voldemort's and as the magical power began to build exponentially; Harry realized that he made yet another grievous mistake. He was glad that his phoenix form hadn't had a burning day in a while...

The magical build up suddenly released with the power of a muggle air-fuel bomb, leveling most of the graveyard. Harry quickly changed into a phoenix as the explosion washed over him, and he was subject to the unique feeling of dying for the first time. Then, he combusted and was reborn. It was an interesting experience; one that he never wanted to relive again. He transformed back and brushed the ash and dirt off his body. He was feeling rather noxious and dizzy, most likely from the rebirth, but he managed to look past that. He glanced over his shoulder to make sure that Rose was unharmed. The mausoleum was far enough away that it escaped the blast with a few scorch marks. *Good...*

He then set out to look for Voldemort...or what was left of him. Harry was sure that he couldn't kill the dark lord, but he was also sure that the explosion would have left Voldemort a mangled mess. Unfortunately, it had also vaporized the death eaters.

He was proved correct. Not far from the sooty smears that were what was left of his inner circle, Voldemort lay twitching, his neck at an odd angle. His limbs had been burned off leaving only cauterized stumps, but his eyes still held the spark of life. Harry felt little pity for the

mangled body that was the dark lord. He knew that it would be a simple task for Rose to off the pathetic creature on the ground before him, and he couldn't resist rubbing a bit of salt into the wounds, so to speak.

"By the way," Harry growled. His jaw ached, like it hadn't been used in a while. Technically it hadn't, Harry figured, as it was pretty much brand new. "You're mortal, now. I destroyed all of your horcruxes."

Harry didn't see Voldemort's eyes widen in a panic as Harry went to fetch Rose. His entire body ached but he ignored it. He wasn't happy, but he was relieved that it was over. Now he could find a way for him and Rose to stay together and start a family. Speaking of... "Rose?" he called as he neared her hiding spot. What he saw there froze the blood in his veins.

There were signs of a magical fight, and he could sense Rose's magic in the air. She had been in the fight and from the looks of things, she had lost. And whoever had won, had taken her.

She was gone, but Harry knew who had her.

The Illuminatus.

Chapter 20

The first thing Rose noticed when she woke up was her headache. Her head was pounding and for the life of her she couldn't figure out why she had it in the first place. She was groggy and she felt like her mind was full of cotton; she couldn't think clearly at all. The next thing she noticed was that her mouth was extremely dry. It felt like she had eaten a mouthful of baby powder. She tried to smack her lips to moisten her mouth but found she couldn't. Her mouth was full of something. When she reached up to remove whatever was in her mouth, she found that she couldn't. Neither of her arms could move more than a few inches from where they were lying above her head and she panicked.

The sudden adrenaline burst cleared her senses and she remembered everything that lead up to this moment...or her unconsciousness. She remembered watching Harry taunt Voldemort and the awe she felt as he almost carelessly tossed spells about. Then, she remembered, she was surrounded by men in dark red robes. She fought them off well enough. In fact, she had been winning when she was unbalanced by a huge shock wave and...hit her head on the same mausoleum she had been taking cover behind. *Wonderful*, she groused mentally. *Looks like they got me...*

She forced herself to open her eyes against the dim light that aggravated her headache and look around. She was on a raised, obsidian dais in the center of a massive chamber that was made out of the same material. The ceiling rose a good twenty feet above her and looking to the left and right she couldn't see any walls very clearly. That might have been because of the black obsidian blending in with the gloom though. The dim light was coming from runes and symbols carved in to the glassy rock walls and inlaid with what looked like gold.

On the dais, Rose was manacled with her arms above her head and feet straight below her. The chains attaching each manacle to the dais were short; only about two, one-inch links. And to top it off, someone had stuffed something in her mouth that was beginning to

taste like an old sock. For Merlin's sake, she was unconscious. What was she going to do? *At least they left me clothed.* She thought...

She had to escape and she had the perfect method to do so. There were no wards that could keep phoenixes out, or in for that matter. She focused on the house she and Harry shared and willed her self there...Or tried to at least. The moment she called upon her phoenix powers, her body was wracked with the most unimaginable pain. It lanced through her very bones and made her muscles feel like they were on fire. She imagined that this was what the *cruciatis* curse felt like...

When Rose stopped trying to teleport the pain faded leaving only a dull ache in its place. As she lay there gasping and crying from the agony that had passed, she heard someone approach the dais. "Oh, you're awake. Pity," he said. "We've locked your animagus transformation and abilities. Can't have you escaping on us, can we?"

Unable to get the old sock out of her mouth or relieve her headache without her hands, she focused on trying to push the wad of stuff in her mouth out with her tongue. If she couldn't flame out, or transform, she needed to be able to cast some spells at least. She had almost gotten it out when the man roughly stuffed it back in her mouth. She squinted angrily at him and could make out the color of his robe, but not much else thanks to her pounding headache. Perhaps she had a concussion too.

"Ah, ah, ah," he taunted. "Can't have you casting any spells either."

Rose groaned through the gag and bit down hard on it. The man's jovial attitude to her kidnapping grated on her nerves. That's not to say she *wasn't* scared though. She was; terrified in fact. But if there was one thing Harry had drilled into her during their training, it was; *keep a clear mind.* It looked like she had to get out and free first.

The first thing she tried was silently and wandlessly pushing magic into her limbs. She thought that if she could make herself strong enough, she could break the chains like Super Girl. She focused hard and gasped when she felt her limbs twitch. *It was working!* She concentrated, pushing more and more magic through her arms and legs. Then when she thought she was strong enough, she pulled.

And pulled, and pulled. The chains groaned and creaked, but not much else.

"It won't work," the man watching her said nonchalantly. "The chains have been charmed unbreakable."

Perhaps for the first time in her life, Rose hated magic. *Bloody ass spells*, she thought bitterly. She closed her eyes and called out to Harry mentally. Perhaps she could clue him in to where she was and he would come rescue her like always. But no, that didn't work either. All she heard was the strange muggle static. She thrashed fruitlessly against her bonds and growled at the man in the maroon robe standing guard over her.

"I know it won't do much good, but try and relax," he said. "It won't do to get worked up before the ritual."

Rose raised an eyebrow and grunted in confusion. "Whuh?" The robed man scoffed before waving to yet another man in identical robes. Rose noted then that similar men bustled about busily. She wondered if they were preparing for this 'ritual'.

"Didn't we tell you?" the man said. He seemed anxious to tell Rose something since his cocky grin turned maniacal. "This ritual requires your sacrifice. It will remove your soul and give it fully to Mr. Potter. It is necessary after all."

Rose's eyes bugged out and she couldn't stop the whimper that escaped her throat. "Don't worry," the man continued. "It will be painless and quick."

Rose began to trash in earnest now. She needed to get out. In her panic, she tried to flame away and only succeeded in hurting herself again. Eventually she collapsed back on the flat surface of the dais completely exhausted and trembling with the pain. *I wish these wankers would just die*, she thought bitterly. Then, she had her answer.

It repulsed her. As much as holding hands with Voldemort and frolicking through Hogsmeade would repulse her, but she knew it would work. She remembered Harry telling her about his second

animagus form; the basilisk. At the time, she hadn't thought much of it beyond, *that's pretty awesome*. But when she realized that she might have a second form after the rune chamber, it had made her skin crawl. Every time she thought about what her second form might be, she wished for anything but a basilisk. Hell, even something as mundane as a regular cat would be better than a basilisk. She would have even taken the form of that traitor, Wormtail; a rat.

But it seemed that fate was mean and vindictive. She knew what her second form was. And as much as he hated it, as much as he loathed taking any human lives, she was thankful. It would give her a way out and back to Harry. With a weary and resigned sigh, she concentrated on what she remembered of basilisks. She remembered the fight against Slytherin's basilisk in the chamber to save Ginny. Everything was in crystal clear focus despite her headache and in a smooth two seconds, Rose transformed.

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When Harry flamed back to the spectator stands, he found the site of the third task a scene of absolute chaos. People were shouting and darting back and forth and it seemed there was nothing the ministry officials could do to calm the crowd. Harry's arrival with Voldemort's desiccated body did nothing to calm the panic. If anything it got worse. As people fled from the gruesome site of Harry and the torso, Harry tried in vain to get someone to talk to him. It was a few minutes later before Dumbledore noticed him.

"Mr. Potter," Dumbledore greeted him. His eyes were completely void of any twinkle.

Harry's eyes in turn narrowed in suspicion. "Dumbledore," he said shortly. "What's going on here?"

Dumbledore explained the situation as completely as he could. When the charms surrounding the cup told the officials that it had been reached, everyone expected the portkey to bring the victor back to the entrance to wild applause. But after ten minutes, when no one showed up, people started to worry. After fifteen minutes, Dumbledore had vanished the entire maze only to find that there was no one left in it. The other three champions had been removed but

the winner, Rose never reappeared. About ten minutes after that, Harry showed up.

Harry sighed wearily. Of all the rotten luck... He should have expected this. None of his plans ever go right.

Dumbledore waved a hand at Voldemort's body. "I believe an explanation is in order, Mr. Potter," he said sternly.

Harry glanced at the body then back at Dumbledore. "Not here. We need to do something with Riddle."

Dumbledore's face registered shock. "*That* is Voldemort?" he asked incredulously.

"What is left of him, yes," Harry answered.

"Is he...alive?" Dumbledore let his question trail off. Harry nodded and Dumbledore then banished the body away.

"I can't kill him," Harry started explaining as the two of them headed back to the castle. He and the headmaster decided to let the ministry officials take care of the panic. "Only Rose can. But he is trapped in his body now since I cast a soul cage on him. He is mortal now too, since I destroyed his horcruxes."

At Dumbledore's raised eyebrow, Harry explained his plan to the old man. As loathe as he was to trust Dumbledore, Harry had no other choice at this point. When he finished his explanation, Dumbledore was shaking his head sadly. "You should have come to me with this, Mr. Potter."

"I'm sure," Harry said skeptically. "I don't trust you, Albus. Not since my fifth year, when you dumped the prophecy on me and I don't think I ever will again." Dumbledore opened his mouth to say something but Harry cut him off. "*Any* version of you."

The two of them continued toward the castle in silence before Harry said. "I need you to find out where Rose was taken."

Dumbledore hesitated for a second before saying, "I am sorry, Mr. Potter, but I cannot-"

Harry stopped in front of the old man, his considerable temper finally breaking loose. "Bullshit," he snarled. "Don't you dare lie to me. I *know* that my Dumbledore had ways of tracking me. Things are too similar here for you to be any different."

Dumbledore still wasn't forthcoming if his scowl was any indication but Harry didn't give him a chance to say anything before he continued in a low, threatening voice. "If anything should happen to Rose, I will willingly become a dark lord the likes of which this backwater, misbegotten little world has never seen. Voldemort will seem like a toddler with a wand compared to the horrors that I will bring."

Dumbledore's eyes widened almost comically before he deflated. "Very well, Mr. Potter," he said wearily. Harry noticed that Dumbledore's eyes were trained on something back by the tournament stands. "But first, I think we should take care of one loose end."

Harry followed his gaze and noticed that the fake Moody was subtly trying to sneak away from the crowd. Harry growled deep in his throat before flashing away and reappearing in front of Moody. "Evans!" he blurted in shock.

Harry lazily waved his wand, dispelling the polyjuice potion and revealing Crouch Jr. before grabbing the man in a sleeper hold and viciously snapping his neck. This only added to the chaos and confusion but Harry didn't care. The first and foremost thing on his mind was where Rose was. He flamed back over to Dumbledore who wore a shocked look on his face though Harry thought it looked rather forced. "What?" Harry snapped.

"You just murdered a man in cold blood," Dumbledore said.

"Wouldn't be the first time," Harry muttered. Dumbledore scoffed and looked about to say something but Harry plowed on. "Oh please, don't give me that crap. First, he was a death eater. Second..." At a loss for a second reason Harry just waved his hands vaguely in the

air. "Besides, I feel bad enough about it already. Now come on. We don't have time. I need to find Rose."

The two of them made their way into the headmaster's office pointedly ignoring the panicked activity in the castle. Harry was singularly focused on getting Rose back. He couldn't focus knowing that she was in danger and it was his fault. As soon as the gargoyle moved aside, Harry ran up the spiral staircase and began to look at the spindly metal things Dumbledore kept in his office. He gave it up as a lost cause however. Dumbledore had never told him how they worked.

The headmaster however bustled around checking each and every device before turning to Harry with a pensive look on his face. "Well?" Harry snapped again. His temper was completely frayed and his patience had run out.

"She is to the south."

Harry's arms fell to his side limply. "That's it?" He asked. Dumbledore shrugged. "All your fancy devices and that's all you know? AUGH!"

Harry then took to pacing back and forth in his impatience. He needed to think this out. He knew that Rose wasn't dead, as he still felt the pull on 'his' soul. He couldn't contact her through their link however. She would have most likely been taken to a ritual site, since anything having to do with soul magic took lengthy rituals. "Are there any ritual sites south of here?" he asked.

Dumbledore pondered for a moment. "The only one that springs to mind is Stonehenge," the aged man said. "But that hasn't been used since Merlin's time."

Harry waved that off. "Whatever. We're going to check that out anyway." With that, he grabbed a hold of the headmaster's robe sleeve and flamed them both to Stonehenge. The two of them landed; Harry gracefully on his feet and Dumbledore in an undignified heap in the grass. Harry noticed a few muggles watching them with wide eyes but he didn't care.

"I'd suggest you leave," he called to them as Dumbledore regained his feet. The muggles took his advice and hurried away. Harry then concentrated, sending his magic out in pulses, much like sonar. He could tell that there were tunnels beneath him, but he didn't know how far down or big they were. "Help me look for a way in," he said to Dumbledore.

The two of them searched futilely for any kind of an entrance. Dumbledore reaffirmed that there was indeed a web of tunnels that spread for miles beneath them but they couldn't find any kind of an entrance. Harry was beginning to become frustrated and if the rippling grass and gathering clouds were any indication, he was about to lose control of his magic again. "Stand back," he said suddenly. Dumbledore wisely back off as Harry pointed his wand at the ground and began to gather his magic. "*Cavare Antrum!*" he shouted. A wide beam of white energy erupted from the tip of his wand and literally melted its way into the ground leaving a red glowing tunnel into the catacombs beneath them.

Harry staggered slightly on his feet feeling the drain on his magic. The spell he had just cast was used by miners in the middle ages to dig tunnels into mountains. However, back then the spell was cast as a ritual spells by a group of miners. Harry had just cast it alone. *That might account for the horrified expression on the old man's face*, thought Harry wryly. It didn't take long for the tunnel to cool and the two men hurried down the steep slope into the catacombs. But whatever they expected to find down there, this wasn't it.

Bodies littered the floor. Most of them, like the one at the bottom of the tunnel Harry had carved looked like they had simply dropped dead, a look of terror on their faces. A few others had been petrified so thoroughly that Harry thought a full strength Mandrake Draught wouldn't revive them. They were as good as dead. Then still others had been mangled, disemboweled or had limbs or heads chopped off.

All of them were Illuminatus members.

Harry smiled maliciously as he realized what had happened. Rose had discovered her second animagus form. The mysteriously dead people had been killed by her stare. The petrified ones had been

caught in Rose's stare reflected off the obsidian walls and floor. As for the mangled ones...Harry suspected that she had used her sword. From his kneeling position next to one of the eviscerated bodies, Harry looked over his shoulder at Dumbledore and noticed that the old man had schooled his features into an expression of revulsion and shock. He even looked fake.

"What do you think, Mr. Potter?" he asked.

Harry stood and wiped the blood on his hands off on his jeans. "I think Rose needs me," he said simply before starting off down the corridor at a jog. Now that he was in the catacombs, he could clearly feel Rose through their link, even if she wasn't answering his call. Amazingly, Dumbledore managed to keep up with him. As Harry ran, he could make out the sounds of a fight in the distance. The screams, shouts and grunts seemed to be magnified as they echoed down the hallway. He turned his jog into a sprint for the last few meters before skidding to a halt at the sight before him.

Rose stood limply in the center of a large chamber next to a raised platform, her Sword of Gryffindor clutched loosely in her hand. Almost every exposed part of her body was covered in blood. Amazingly enough she looked unharmed save for the haunted look in her eyes as she looked at the writhing and suffering man on the floor in front of her. Eventually the man stopped suffering and died.

"Rose?" Harry called softly as he took a few tentative steps forward. He glanced back at the headmaster to see him stop at the entrance to the chamber, a look of unfeigned horror on his face. Rose didn't respond so Harry tried again. "Rose, talk to me."

Rose simply stood there, a blank expression on her face. "They wouldn't stop coming..." she said suddenly, making Harry jump. "I...I had to...but I didn't...didn't want to..."

Harry closed the last few steps toward the girl softly and slowly. "I know, love. I know," he said. He placed a hand gently on Rose's shoulder and she startled. The sword dropped from her hand and clattered against the blood smeared obsidian floor before fading back into the ether.

“H-Harry?”

“I’m here,” Harry said as knelt next to her. Rose sunk down against him and began to sob. Harry clutched her to him and discretely cast a few *scourgify* charms to clean the blood from her face and hair. As she continued to blubber incoherently, Harry did his best to soothe her. He was never good at consoling emotional women, but he tried. He stroked her hair and muttered soft words in her ear. Eventually, Rose’s hysterical sobs calmed into whimpers and hitched breaths and Harry pulled her gently away. They locked eyes and Harry’s look conveyed everything his words couldn’t; *you did what you had to, I’m not ashamed of you...I still love you.*

“I’m fine,” Rose answered to Harry’s unasked question. She smirked slightly when Harry raised his eyebrows skeptically.

“My friends never believed me when I told them that,” he said. “And I know you’re lying.”

Rose looked down at her shoes and frowned slightly. “I’ll be okay.” She said softly.

As Harry helped Rose to her feet, he felt a slight pull, like something was trying to get his attention. He glanced down at Rose to see if she had felt something, but she seemed oblivious as she clung to Harry’s midsection. He ran his fingers through her hair comfortably and glanced around the room. The pull tugged at him again, this time a little more insistently and Harry knew that he needed to follow it. He pushed Rose away to arms length and put both hands on her cheeks lovingly. “Rose, I need you to go with the Headmaster.”

“But- I...why?” she said sadly.

“There’s something down here I need to take care of,” he explained loud enough for Dumbledore to hear. “We’ll meet up afterward. I promise.” He looked into her eyes which were shimmering with tears. **I don’t trust him, Rose, but I have no other choice at this point. If you need to, defend yourself and call for me. I’ll come flashing in.** He said mentally.

I don’t have my wand... Rose said back.

Harry frowned and handed Rose his wand. He could defend himself well enough wandlessly if necessary. **I love you Rose, and I always will.**

Dumbledore approached and laid a gentle hand on Rose's shoulder and led her out of the chamber. Harry saw that she tried to not flinch but only marginally succeeded. He hoped he was doing the right thing as he turned and headed deeper into the catacombs.

The bodies thinned out and eventually disappeared the deeper Harry went. He didn't know how, but he knew that he was heading to the end of this adventure. Something in his gut told him as much. Eventually he reached his destination. It was a large circular room that had been carved out of the same obsidian that the rest of the catacomb was made out of. In the center near the far wall sat a throne like chair in which a man in a maroon robe sat. Violet rimmed black *rips* hovered at intervals in the air casting an unsettling violet light around the room and as Harry watched, another one opened up. He felt inexplicably drawn to these. The man in the chair moved slightly and Harry's attention was drawn back to him. As the man stood up and removed his hood, Harry couldn't help but gasp.

It was Mathias Elderberry, the kind owner of the apothecary on Nocturne Alley.

(((o)))

Rose watched Harry as long as she was able as Dumbledore lead her away from the ritual chamber. She tried to avoid looking at the bodies of the men she had killed, no *slaughtered. It was necessary*, she told herself, over and over again. Harry had told her too with that look he gave her. But she couldn't help but feel guilty, like there was some other way she could have done that. She stumbled slightly and realized that the headmaster was hurrying her along.

"Professor, sir?" she asked but the old man ignored her save for his grip on her shoulder tightening almost painfully. He seemed to have a very intense look on his face. Rose wrenched her shoulder out of his hand. "Where are we going?" she asked. Her right hand was clutched tightly around Harry's wand.

Dumbledore smiled at her, but it was far from a friendly smile. It caused a shiver to run down her spine and the little hairs on the back of her neck to stand on end. "We are heading back to my office, Rose," Dumbledore said. "As soon as we are out of these tunnels, I will make a portkey for you and join you shortly."

Rose nodded stiffly and shied away as Dumbledore reached for her again. "I can follow you well enough, *sir*."

"Very well," Dumbledore said and he continued up the slope to the surface. Rose followed him, not for the first time wishing Harry had come with. She was confident in her ability to get away should the need arise though. She watched as Dumbledore picked up a stone from the ground and tapped it with his wand while saying, "*Portus*." The rock glowed blue for a moment before the glow faded.

"If you will just take this stone, we can get on with business as usual," he said.

As soon as Rose touched the stone, Dumbledore activated it and Rose felt the disconcerting sensation of having a hook pulling her by her navel. She landed sprawled on one of the rugs in the headmaster's office and clambered to her feet, her hand still gripping the wand. Dumbledore popped into existence beside the bookcase in his office. Without another word, he then pulled a book out and the bookcase slid to the right revealing a hidden ante-chamber. *How cliché*, Rose thought.

"Wait here please," Dumbledore said as he disappeared into the room. Rose didn't have much time to wonder what he was doing before the old man reemerged levitating what looked to be a mangled side of beef behind him. Rose recoiled in shock when she realized that it was the remains of a man.

"What..." she started to ask but Dumbledore cut her off.

"This," he started, dropping the torso to the stone floor with a fleshy thud. "Is the remains of Lord Voldemort. It is your job to end his pitiful existence."

"He's still *alive*?" she asked incredulously. Dumbledore nodded.

"It is your job to finish him," he said. "I assume you know the prophecy?"

Still fairly numb from her experience in the catacombs, Rose approached cautiously and leveled her wand. "I do," she said. Voldemort's eyes blazed with hatred and insanity. Rose could only imagine what torment he must be going through, to be stuck in a mangled corpse of a body. She decided to end it swiftly. Clenching her eyes shut, she fired a silent bludgeoning hex at Voldemort's head, crushing it beyond recognition.

Almost immediately she felt a tingling in her scar. The headache she had learned as a very young girl to ignore faded leaving her mind blissfully clear. She reached up and touched her forehead with a smile to find that the scar itself had faded from her brow. "It's over?" she asked no one in particular.

"Not quite," Dumbledore answered. Rose snapped her head toward him so fast she was sure she would develop a crick in her neck later.

"What do you mean," she asked.

Dumbledore looked remorseless as he explained. "I plan on taking credit for Voldemort's downfall," he began. "What I require of you now, is your full cooperation in turning yourself into the authorities as a willing servant of Harry Evans, a rising dark lord. I need you to sign these documents." He gestured at a stack of parchment on his desk.

Rose could only stare at the headmaster incredulously. "You're crazy!" she blurted leveling her wand at the old man. "Harry is no dark lord!"

A sinister smile spread across the headmaster's face looking completely out of place there. His eyes were twinkling, but this time it was malicious. "Ah, but he confessed to me directly," he said walking over to his pensieve. He placed his wand to his temple and withdrew a silvery strand that he placed in the stone bowl. He swirled it for a moment and a tiny image of Harry emerged from the glowing liquid.

"I will willingly become a dark lord the likes of which this backwater, misbegotten little world has never seen. Voldemort will seem like a

toddler with a wand compared to the horrors that I will bring." The image of Harry said.

Rose was silent for a moment before shouting, "That was probably because *you* were trying to keep him from coming to get me!" Rose was defiant as she pointed Harry's wand at Dumbledore's head. "Harry wouldn't do anything he didn't think he *had to*."

"Regardless my dear," Dumbledore said. Rose shuddered at the 'my dear' title. "I will have your cooperation, with or without your consent. *Imperio!*"

Rose couldn't dodge the spell even if she had any warning. A warm fuzzy feeling enveloped her along with a soothing voice that commanded her to, '*sign the papers.*' But she didn't want to sign the papers. The voice was insistant however. She had to sign the papers. Rose felt herself walk aimlessly to the desk and reach for a quill. Then, in addition to the soothing voice that wanted her to sign the papers was another voice that sounded like her own. It was reminding her that should she sign the papers, both her and Harry's lives would be over before they even started. Rose stopped with the quill touching the parchment. "No..." she ground out.

Dumbledore sighed. "I suppose I have to do it the hard way then. You are about to be killed resisting arrest."

Rose quickly transfigured the quill into a dagger that she threw at the headmaster. "You'll have to catch me first you son of a bitch!" she growled. As Dumbledore deftly dodged the knife, Rose flamed away to the only place she now felt safe; Harry's house.

She appeared in the living room and took a few deep breaths to calm her racing heart, only to have it nearly stop as Dumbledore popped into existence right behind her. *Harry must have forgotten to put the Fidelius back up!* Rose thought frantically as she dove behind a couch. *How did he even know I was here!?*

"Don't make this harder than it has to be Ms. Potter," Dumbledore said in a false cheery voice. He waved his wand and simply vanished the couch but Rose was ready for it.

She popped up and rapid-fired bludgeoning hexes at the old man who had to twirl out of the way to avoid them. Rose took the opportunity to flame away, back to the one place she thought she would never see again; Number 4, Privit Drive. She appeared in an inferno in her small bedroom that used to be Dudley's second room. She quickly put out the small fires her appearance had caused, but evidently she wasn't quiet enough.

Petunia burst into the room brandishing a carving knife. When she spotted Rose, she shrieked and dropped the knife to clutch her hear. "What the bloody hell are you doing here, brat?!" she demanded harshly. "Shouldn't you be at that *freak* school of yours?"

Rose wouldn't let herself be baited and simply frog marched her aunt out of the room and back downstairs into the immaculate kitchen. "You need to get somewhere safe, Aunt Petunia," she said quickly. Petunia turned and shoved Rose away.

"What are you talking about!?" she spat.

Rose gritted her teeth against her anger. Her aunt really could be insufferable. "Look, a very nasty man is trying to kill me. I don't think he will be able to find me here but-" Rose was interrupted by Dumbledore apparating directly into the kitchen. Petunia shrieked again but her scream was turned to a gurgle and she fell to the floor as her throat was cut by Dumbledore's cutting hex. Rose stared at the blood that gushed from her Aunt's corpse. She may not have loved her Aunt, but Petunia was still family.

"You see what you made me do?" Dumbledore said snappishly.

"You *monster!*" Rose screamed. She flung curse after curse at the insane old man but none of them met their mark, instead being deflected away or dodged to destroy the kitchen. In a fit of fury, Rose banished the entire refrigerator at the Headmaster. It crushed him against the far wall with a sickening crunch. Rose took the opportunity to flame away.

This time she reappeared at the park on Wisteria Walk, scaring the few children and their parents that were playing on the equipment. / *need a place to hide*, she thought looking around frantically. She

didn't know how Dumbledore always knew where she was. She spied some bushes in the distance and thought they would be good enough. As she hurried over to the hedges that ringed the park, her emotions caught up to her and she began to sob. She managed to control them enough that the crying wasn't hysterical, but she was shaken none the less. She pulled her knees up and hugged them to her chest. **Harry? Harry I need you...please.** She called. But she was answered only with that weird muggle static.

She nearly jumped out of her skin when Dumbledore appeared with a loud pop in the middle of the park, startling the few people that Rose hadn't. He looked ragged, his left arm hanging limply from his shoulder and his purple robes tattered and soaked with blood. It seemed that the refrigerator had done a number on him. "I know you are here, girl," he snarled. It seemed that he had dropped the false grandfatherly attitude. "If you come out now, I promise to make your death swift and painless."

Rose shook her head frantically, wondering just what had happened to the kind old man from her first three years at the school. Was he possessed? Insane? Or was he always like this, just waiting for the opportunity to show his true colors? *And how the bloody hell was he...* Then it hit her. The strange silver instruments she had seen in his office in Harry's memories. Harry had explained that most of them were tracking devices keyed to Harry when he was under the headmaster's thumb. Was it too much of a stretch to think that this Dumbledore was tracking her?

She tried once more to reach Harry, but still only got static. With a resigned sigh, she then flamed to the headmaster's office, not hearing or seeing the others that apparated into the park. When she reappeared, she looked around for anything she might recognize and for the first time she wondered just where Fawkes was. Perhaps the phoenix had left the headmaster. She then proceeded to completely destroy the office and study more thoroughly than Harry had in his fifth year.

As she finished off the bookcase, she heard a pop behind her near the office entrance followed by a series of other pops. She spun around just in time to see the headmaster collapse, his chest a

gaping, bloody hole. Behind her were four men cloaked in maroon robes. *Where the hell was Harry?*

(((o)))

"You have no idea just how badly you screwed things up, do you?" Mathias said. His voice was forlorn and his posture and face spoke of disappointment.

Harry stood there dumbfounded. Of all the people he expected to find down here in the bowels of the catacomb, Mathias Elderberry was the last person on his mind. How such a kind, generous man could be the mastermind of an organization hell bent on the death of the girl he loved was beyond him. "If you mean Rose's death, then yes, I do have an idea. And I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat."

"You truly have no idea..." Mathias shook his head and sighed. Harry wondered just what it was that he messed up if it wasn't simply keeping Rose alive.

"Care to enlighten me?" he asked.

"You spoke to Mr. Eckerly, didn't you?" Mathias shot back. "He should have explained everything."

"Well, he didn't," Harry said. He didn't know what was staying his hand. He should kill this man for the torment he and Rose had been through. "All he told me was that Rose needed to die, and there was nothing I could do to stop it."

Mathias took a moment to curse Eckerly's name before scrubbing at the graying scruff that adorned his chin. "How much do you know about soul magic, Harry?" he asked after a moment's silence.

Harry held up his fingers less than an inch apart. "About that much."

Mathias huffed in annoyance. "I will try to keep this simple. You know that Rose and yourself are sharing a soul now, correct." Harry nodded and Mathias continued. "Good. To put it bluntly, the ritual that summoned you went wrong. It was supposed to be on a...timer, so to speak, the end of the timer being Rose's prophesied death on June

fourth of next year. When she died, the ritual was to pull a...version of you from another reality into this one, create a body for you, and use Rose's free soul to power it."

"Wait, wait..." Harry interrupted. "I thought a soul made you who you are."

Mathias shook his head. "No. Your mind and experiences make you who you are. Your soul is like..." He waved his hand vaguely in the air as he thought of a proper term. "Like a muggle battery. It is what powers your body. Every living being has a soul, just some, like ours, are more powerful than others. When Voldemort split his soul, he didn't diminish it by much. He essentially created seven batteries for himself, where as a normal person only has one. He would have simply lived seven times longer than a normal person."

Something didn't make sense to Harry. He remembered the diary, and the specter of a young Tom Riddle. He explained that all to Mathias.

"That," Mathias went on, "is part of the Horcruxes magic. It imprints a version of your personality and mind on the horcrux. I do not know why."

"Back to yours and Rose's soul. The two of you are more powerful than we expected, Rose more so since you have helped her along." Mathias continued. Harry blushed slightly remembering himself helping Rose. "When you arrived and your body was created, over a year too early I might add..."

Harry muttered something about it not being his fault.

"It needed a soul, *your* soul, which was currently in Rose, to power it. Unfortunately, Rose was still using it and her magic was loathe to part with it. Thus, the two of you shared the same soul. It is not too different from a soul bond, in which a married couple joins their souls, however..." he paused for effect. "That couple has the power of two souls, where as you and Rose had one."

Harry paled. "Does that mean...mean that I don't really love Rose?" he asked shakily. He didn't want to think his affections for the small red haired girl he had met all those months ago were fabricated.

Mathias smiled happily. "No, Harry. You truly do love her. Love, true love such as yours, cannot be fabricated by any magic."

Harry sighed in relief. "So then, tell me. *Why* did she have to die?"

Mathias gestured to one of the rifts that were rapidly multiplying. "These," he said simply. "A soul is not meant to be split among two people. The amount of magic it requires the two of you to exert to keep a hold of it is tearing the fabric of reality asunder." He paused to let Harry process that. When Harry's face paled, he went on. "Yes, reality will end if Rose...or yourself, do not die. We would rather Rose perish, as we need you to take care of Voldemort for us."

Harry barked a short laugh that was completely devoid of any humor. "I can't kill him," he said simply. Mathias stared at him blankly and Harry hurriedly explained. "The prophecy...?"

Mathias simply looked confused and Harry laughed again. "Oh come on... Surely the all mighty Illuminatus knows about the prophecy made about Voldemort's downfall?"

Mathias nodded. "That is why we need you to..."

But Harry cut him off. "*Here* it refers to Rose, not me. *I* can't kill him." Harry said. Mathias' face fell but Harry smiled. "Oh don't look like that. I've already take care of it. All Rose needs to do is cast one little spell and...it's all over."

Mathias seemed to perk up at this but his mood quickly dimmed. "There is still the matter of the two of you sharing a soul. I'm afraid you can't remain here."

Harry nodded sadly. He knew Mathias was telling the truth and as much as he hated being caught in another leader's chess game, he knew what he had to do. "Is there a way for me to get back to my world?" he asked. Then he panicked. "What about my old body?"

"All you need do is step through one of these rifts. It will carry your mind back to your old world. As for your old body, it was recovered by the good people of Hogsmeade and interred in the long term ward at St. Mungo's. It is waiting on you to reclaim it." Mathias answered.

Harry sighed and, without any delay, started toward the rift that was pulling at him. He stopped when Mathias called for him. "Yeah?"

Mathias handed him a familiar wand and Harry took it reverently. "I believe you need this," he said with a small smile. "It is Rose's but it is identical to yours, yes?"

Harry mirrored the smile as he stared at the piece of holly in his hands. His eyes watered with unshed tears. He would really miss Rose. "Take care of Rose for me, will you?" he asked. He knew he could trust the man. Mathias nodded and Harry stepped into the rift. He was distantly aware that he was leaving his stuff behind, but he didn't care. It wasn't like he needed it.

Harry...help...

Harry paused when he heard Rose's voice in his mind, her words interspersed with bursts of static. She was in trouble! He tried to step back out of the rift but the magic already had a hold of him and he could feel his body starting to dissolve. "Go now! She needs you!" he shouted to Mathias over the wind rushing in his ears. He saw the rift close around him before everything faded away.

(((o)))

You-Know-Who, No More!

By Special Correspondent – Rita Skeeter

Late yesterday afternoon, the magical world was shocked to its core by the death of Hogwarts Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore. Normally, a death of this magnitude; of a man as revered as Dumbledore would have the people grieving, but your reporter can exclusively reveal that he was killed by none other than Rose Potter, The-Girl-Who-Lived's bodyguards as she defended her life against the aged man.

Various muggles through out England saw him chasing Ms. Potter about while casting dangerous hexes and curses in an attempt to kill the young girl and claim credit for vanquishing the Dark Lord, who was not vanquished as many people had thought. This reporter had the chance to interview one of the body guards.

"The man Dumbledore was a raving lunatic." The man who declined to give his identity said. "We managed to catch up with him as Rose fled the park in Little Whinging, Surrey and unfortunately had to kill him."

"She Rose was haggard and bloody from her fight with You-Know-Who, and we just couldn't believe that Dumbledore would try and steal all the glory."

Regardless as to what happened, this reporter feels that we owe Rose Potter a debt which can never be repaid. All we can do for now is say, Thank you.

Details of the Battle between You-Know-Who and Rose Potter. Pg. 2

Minerva McGonagall to succeed Dumbledore as Headmistress. Pg. 3

Sirius Black exonerated of all charges, to take position as Transfiguration Prof. at Hogwarts. Pg. 4

(((o)))

Rose tossed the paper down on the table in the dining room of Harry's house. The article got most of the of the important points right, but Rose didn't care either way. Voldemort was gone forever. But so was Harry...

It had been two days since the ordeal. Two long days since Harry had left her. She couldn't fault him. Mathias and the remains of the Illuminatus had explained everything to her, and her feeble *Legillimency* skills had told her that they were telling the truth. She had grieved, and in truth she was still grieving but she wasn't without hope. If the Illuminatus had found a way to bring Harry here in the first place, she was certain that there were others.

(((o)))

Eight months later...

Rose and Hermione sat in the library researching dimensional travel. They had taken every weekend to do so, except Christmas, but information on the topic was sketchy at best. But still, Rose kept hoping.

Rose rested her chin in her hands and tried not to fall asleep as Hermione poured over a huge tome. By her grunts of frustration, Rose could tell that Hermione wasn't making any progress. Rose's mind wandered back to last year, when Harry had helped her train for the Tri-Wizard Tournament. She thought about the dragon and her gamble of casting the ancient ice magic. She thought about the Christmas they spent together, and the portraits he had found for her which were hanging on either side of her bed in her dorm. She smiled as she recalled the tongue lashing her mother had given her father for even *thinking* of occupying his frame in the girl's dorm.

Eventually, she had given in, if just so they could all be together. Then, her mind wandered to the second task. Specifically on one thing Harry had told her.

"Remember Rose," Harry had told her. *"Phoenixes can teleport anywhere."*

Hermione waved her hand in front of Rose's face but Rose didn't respond. Hermione was both worried for her friend and excited at the same time that maybe Harry had contacted her. After a full minute of Rose zoning out, Hermione said, "Rose, are you there?"

"OH MY GOD!" Rose exclaimed suddenly, making Hermione fall out of her chair in fright. Madame Pince hissed at them both and Rose had the decency to look abashed before explaining in a frantic whisper. "I can't believe I forgot. Harry told me something before the second task; remember the one in the lake? It was almost like he *knew* something like this was going to happen, but knowing him he didn't. I don't think he believed in divination, even the prophecy. Besides, if he knew I think he would be here with me now, unless there was something keeping him..."

“Rose, you’re babbling. What did Harry say?”

“Sorry,” Rose said, thought she didn’t sound like she meant it. “He told me that a phoenix can teleport anywhere.” At Hermione’s sudden gasp, Rose nodded. “*Anywhere.*”

“You think you can...?” Hermione asked. She held up one hand and moved her other past it, pantomiming passing a barrier. Rose nodded excitedly and moved into the center of the library. She scrunched her eyes shut and began to concentrate only to have it broken by Hermione screeching, “Not in the library! There are books here!”

Madame Pince ejected them from the library after that. Hermione felt mortified if the blush and scowl on her face were any indication. But Rose didn’t care either way. If this worked, she could have her Harry back. She took Hermione by the hand and all but dragged the bookworm out on to the Hogwarts lawn. Once there, she wasted no time in concentrating again. She disappeared in a flash of fire, taking a detour to the house that she and Harry had shared. She gathered up all the stuff that he had appeared that fateful day with; his trunk, books, cloak and Marauder’s map. She then flamed immediately back to the Hogwarts lawn where Hermione was all but sobbing. She immediately dropped it and ran over to give Hermione a hug.

Hermione hugged her back tightly. “I thought you had left without saying goodbye,” Hermione sniffled.

“I’ll come back as soon as I can, Hermione. I promise.” Rose whispered. She pulled away and saw Hermione wipe her eyes. Now for Harry...

Rose closed her eyes tightly and clenched her fists at her sides. Since she didn’t know *where* Harry was, she concentrated on him specifically; his hair, his smell, his eyes...and she willed her self there. Nothing happened at first, but then slowly, but surely, the phoenix fire began to pulse from her. It burst outward in slow but methodical waves, each pulse rippling the grass outward from where she was standing.

The pulsing became faster and more powerful. Had Rose opened her eyes, she would have seen that a crowd had gathered around her.

Headmistress McGonagall was frantically trying to gain her attention, but the fire pulses were keeping everyone at bay. Eventually, the pulses merged into one constant inferno that oddly enough left the grass intact. Then, with a ripping sound, Rose finally tore her way through the fabric of reality.

In the blink of an eye she reappeared, oddly enough almost in the exact same place that she had flamed away from. The first thing she noticed was that everything, *everything*, was wrong. The sky, for one was red. The formerly lush, green grass she had been standing on was gone, replaced with hard, unyielding earth. The thing that stood out the most, however, was the ruined remains of Hogwarts.

She didn't have much time to grieve or otherwise admire the scenery as she was forced to roll quickly away from a sickly yellow bone-breaking curse that had been fired in her direction. She bumped into a pair of jean-clad legs on her way back up and was nearly knocked off her feet, but someone steadied her.

"Rose?" he asked bewilderedly.

"Harry!" she shrieked, throwing her arms around his torso. She was mildly surprised when Harry quickly pried her off.

"Now...is not the...best time." He said.

Rose followed his gaze over her shoulder and her jaw dropped.

Leading an army of death eaters in various states of decay was none other than a very young, very beautiful, very *alive*, Bellatrix Lestrange...

A/N: Just in case any of you were wondering, yes there will be a sequel. I have it planned, but like I said above, other stuff first. Thanks again for reading.